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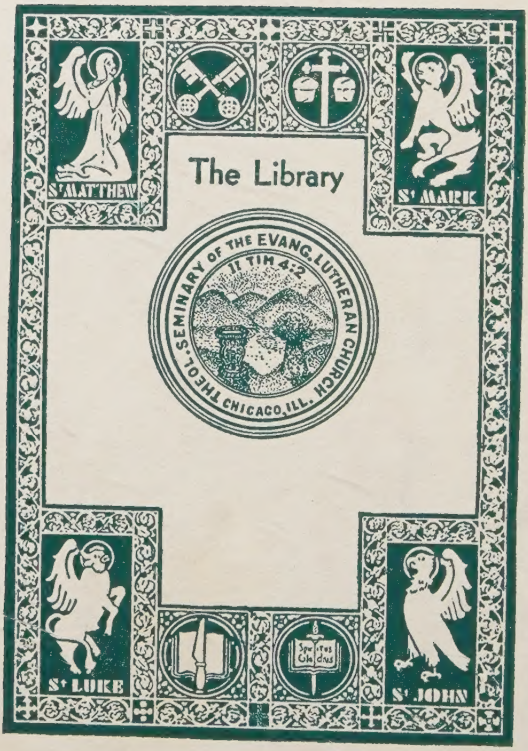
GREGORY THE GREAT

SIR HENRY H. HOWORTH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To my kind friend C. E Lawrence
who has spared no pains in
helping to see my book through
the press and has won my heart
by his urbanity and modesty
May his life be long and full of friends
Henry H Hewett Oct 6th 1912

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SAINT GREGORY
THE GREAT

STATUE OF POPE GREGORY, BEGUN BY MICHAEL ANGELO, AND COMPLETED BY NICHOLAS CORDIER, NOW IN THE CHAPEL OF STA. BARBARA AT ST. GREGORIO.

Frontispiece.

SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT

BY SIR HENRY H. HOWORTH
K.C.I.E., HON. D.C.L. (DURHAM), F.R.S., F.S.A., ETC. ETC.
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AUTHOR OF
"THE HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS" "CHINGHIZ KHAN AND HIS ANCESTORS"
"THE MAMMOTH AND THE FLOOD" "ICE OR WATER" ETC. ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS, MAP, AND TABLES

27151

LONDON
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1912

TO

THE REV. F. HOMES DUDDEN, B.D.

WHO HAS COMBINED IN HIS GREAT LIFE OF ST. GREGORY THE THOROUGHNESS AND RESEARCH OF GERMANY WITH THE PICTURESQUE AND LUCID DICTION OF AN ACCOMPLISHED ENGLISH SCHOLAR

PREFACE

Those who practise the craft of the historian have continually been exercised as to its proper function. With some it is an art, a sister art to that of the painter, and its proper sphere is that of describing the panorama of human life as it has passed across the great stage of Time. Largely oblivious of moral tendencies or of the purpose of the whole show, its aim, they urge, ought to be to gratify the craving of us all for the picturesque, the strange, and the dramatic. Like those who paint history instead of writing it, they are again divided into two schools. One of them pursues minute detail, spends much time and labour in verifying facts, and claims that truth and not moral profit being its chief goal, all things are worth recording that add anything to the picture. They are the Pre-Raphaelites of our profession. An opposite school protests continually that this pursuit of detail is largely pernicious, that it entirely disturbs the balance and perspective of the story, that we cannot in consequence see the great woods and forests we have to traverse, because our eyes are engrossed by the individual trees, and we thus lose ourselves in a pathless

waste. They hold that it is the broader and larger effects we ought to cherish, rather than the minute and meticulous pursuit of little details. These are the historical Impressionists, with whom the mirage often and avowedly takes the place of the actual landscape and castles in the sky, and in the fire-grate take the place of those made of stone or brick.

There is another school of historians with whom the panoramic type of the work is not the ideal; who do not deem all history equally important and equally deserving of minute record. They are ever in search not so much of the picturesque and the romantic, as of causes and tendencies, of changes and movements. They want to know why all this procession of human life is moving thus, what its plan and purpose are, whence it came, whither it is bound, what or who causes its steps to lag betimes and betimes to speed on, and they further try and look forward by tracing the road that has been hitherto traversed with a special eye to its tendencies.

It would be foolish and inconsequent to say that any one of these methods and aims is useless or mistaken. They all have their purpose, just as the various schools of painting in colours have. As we are thankful in passing through a picture gallery to explore the lessons furnished by each, the Pre-Raphaelite as well as the Impressionist, so we feel thankful as we traverse the shelves in our library, that the teller of stories as well as the

philosopher, that Herodotus as well as Thucydides, and Livy as well as Tacitus are there.

There is yet another type of historian, who, instead of dealing with a long or sustained story, selects a short and definite period marked either by the career of some potent maker of history or by one of those convulsions which occasionally diversify the general uniformity and the process of slow change which mark the general plan. By such a choice it is possible to combine a good deal of the detail which is necessary, if we are to realise faithfully the conditions and the limitations under which the great change has taken place, with an attempt to analyse the direction and effect of the forces which are shaping our ends, while they are temporarily working at fever heat and at railway speed.

Such a period is that marked by the career of Pope Gregory the First, which I have chosen for this volume. He was one of the few really remarkable men the world has seen, if distinction means stamping one's foot on the fragile sands where our lot is cast in such an impressive way that the footprints shall last for many centuries. He stood with one foot amidst the ruins of the old worn-out world and the other in the chaotic anarchy which was presently to give birth to a new world, and we may consider the year 600, which marks the middle of his most active career, as the real frontier between the old world and the new.

The man himself was a very remarkable one.

A Roman noble, he was one of the few whose families had remained in Old Rome when so many others had migrated to the New Rome—Constantinople, where the Court and all its attractions for the ambitious man or the sybarite were to be found. Possessing great wealth and social position and great natural gifts (especially the Divine gift of indomitable energy), he was appointed, when quite young, to the most dignified civil position still remaining in the City, namely, the office of Præfect, and thus acquired a very considerable prestige. When carried away by the tide of religious enthusiasm which was then at its flow, and which led the gilded youth of Italy in so many cases to abandon their wealth and to adopt an ascetic life, he was not permitted to bury himself in seclusion, but was selected by the Pope for the greatest diplomatic post he had in his gift, which was generally reserved for men of high family, namely, that of Nuncio at Constantinople. There he lived for some years in a position of equality with the great nobles, and was on very friendly and familiar terms with the Imperial family. There he also associated with such learned men as still remained in the Christian world.

While there he applied his leisure and his very vigorous intellect to recasting the theological and ethical standards of his Church. A faithful pupil of the greatest theologian among the Latin Fathers, St. Augustine, he made plain and clear a great

deal in his teaching which was too technical and abstract for most men. During a very few years in a life overloaded with cares and sickness he produced several works, written in very nervous and attractive if somewhat rustic Latin, dealing with the intricacies of Christian dogma and the duties of Christian teachers and their flocks. These were suffused in a highly ideal atmosphere. No preacher ever raised aloft the standard of true righteousness more effectively. These works remained for many centuries the most potent and most read of all manuals. They formed the inspiration of the Mediæval Church, and be it said also the basis of what is called Scholasticism, namely, the application of logic and reasoning to the establishment and support of dogma. The latter process was afterwards denounced as perilous and unfruitful by another great Church doctor, our English philosopher Occam.

Returning to Rome, he no doubt took back with him many thoughts and ideas which had arisen among the quick-witted Greeks, whose whole thought had latterly been directed to theology and its dependent studies. These bore fruit in certain changes (we know not how many) in the ritual, in the Church music, in the Calendar, etc. etc., which were now imported into Italy for the first time.

It was not long before the Pope, his master, died, a victim of the terrible plague which devastated Europe at this time and lasted for so many years,

and which no doubt had great social and economic results which have not been sufficiently appreciated. In their desolation and misery the Roman crowd elected Gregory, the former præfect, the experienced diplomat, and the educated Roman gentleman, to the vacant seat of Pelagius the Second. No other man then living was so fitted to cope with the woeful condition of things, and it must be said that the fates made it possible for him to act a great part. It was the fact that the Emperor's residence and Court were both far away, and that the administration of the Empire was controlled from Constantinople, that left him great initiative. This was supplemented by another fact, namely, that the Emperor's hands were full with wars against the Avars and the Slavs in the north and the Persians in the east, which left him no time to think of Italy, and he was only too pleased if some efficient man would undertake to do at Rome what his representative at Ravenna had neither the means nor the will to do. There was another very helpful support to the Pope, namely, the enormous wealth of the Holy See, which had recently been recruited by great legacies of land and other riches, and which made his income almost rival that of the Emperor. It was these facts, besides his great prestige, that enabled him to initiate that large control of the civil administration of Rome which bore much fruit in later times. Once seated on the throne of St. Peter he devoted his businesslike capacity to revising the administration of the vast

papal patrimony, in which work, while in the main preserving its old Roman features, he largely reformed its machinery. He also entirely revised the methods of eleemosynary help to the Roman poor, who for centuries had largely lived on doles, and whose patrons, the old families, had gone elsewhere. He also gave a great impetus to the spread of monachism, and exalted the monk's life as the ideal of all lives, devoting most of his private fortune to its propaganda. In the world of politics he was no less busy. By his efforts the Lombards were converted from Arianism to orthodoxy, while by his tact and diplomacy he preserved Rome, which was bleeding from its many wounds, from being overwhelmed by them.

One notable chapter in Gregory's ever-busy life has not found a place in this volume, namely, the missionary enterprise by which he was the first to convert a portion of the English race to the Christian faith. The book has, in fact, grown in the writing—perhaps necessarily grown if the subject was to be adequately treated—and the subject of Gregory's mission to England will be told in a second volume to appear shortly.

Returning to the Pope and summing up his work, it may be very truly said that few men in so short a time with such a fragile life ever did so much that proved to be lasting. That all he did was equally useful to the world is another matter. In some things his vast reputation gave an impetus to certain sides of his teaching

which put back the clock of progress very materially. He denounced the study of the ancient writers, and led men's minds away from the illuminating thoughts which the best minds of Greece and Rome had produced to the narrow and largely fruitless fields of dogmatic theology and the study of the lives of those he deemed saintly men. He despised Art and the Humanities as inconsistent with his ascetic standards. He limited useful knowledge to the narrow and largely fruitless fields of dogmatic theology and the lives of saints. The crude miracles with which they were filled and the different forms of magic they illustrated, were his delight, and he accepted the theory that what a good man had said should be accepted, however otherwise incredible. He it was who filled the Dark Ages with the grim imagery that occupied so much of its thought, in which fantastic visions of devils and angels, of heaven, hell, and purgatory are so much in evidence. On the other hand, his theories of orthodoxy and his methods of dealing with what he deemed the greatest of all sins, namely, heresy and schism, formed the *vade mecum* of many inquisitors and the justification of many autos-da-fé.

This is all true. It was very largely due to the atmosphere in which he was born that it was so. Such thoughts permeated the whole Christian world, which at the time was overshadowed by a vivid expectation of the approaching end of all things. Nevertheless, his great prestige as the Senior Doctor

of the Church gave them the potency they acquired. They formed, however, only a secondary feature in the life and career of the great man he was—the greatest man of his time, who stood high above his contemporaries whether as a politician, an administrator, or as a preacher and example of high and noble standards in the field of morals. There was nothing mean or sordid about him. When need arose he showed exemplary courage, and the following pages will show in how many ways he excelled. His letters, of which hundreds remain, are full of kindly thought for everybody save heretics, and teem with humour and vivacity, and are the best proofs of his ubiquitous vigilance.

In the Introduction which follows, I have analysed the authorities which I have used for his life. I hope I have not failed to acknowledge amply my obligations to those from whose learning I have profited, and that the references at the bottom of my pages will bear witness to my solicitude in this behalf. I have in some instances departed from the views of my predecessors, but have never ceased to be grateful for their inspiration, even where I have failed to follow their reasoning. Let me close with the words of a delightful library companion of mine who wrote the first history of the English Church, Bede.

In concluding his preface to that work, he says, and I echo his words :—

Omnes, ad quos haec eadem historia pervenire

potuerit nostrae nationis, legentes sive audientes, suppliciter precor, ut pro meis infirmitatibus et mentis et corporis apud supernam clementiam saepius intervenire meminerint.

HENRY H. HOWORTH.

30 COLLINGHAM PLACE, S.W.,
1st March 1912.

INTRODUCTION

It is a prime factor in modern methods of historical research that before we sit down to write we should sift and analyse our authorities, and not merely separate the spurious from the true but give to each one its due weight, and discard all secondary sources and compilations in favour of the original and contemporary witnesses wherever these latter exist. To pile up masses of authorities in notes when many or most of them are really echoes or copies of the one original witness, is mere pedantry and not science. Its only tendency is to lessen instead of increasing the weight of the testimony.

In the case of Pope Gregory the Great, the most important of all the witnesses is himself, for he was a most voluminous and reliable writer, and has left us a great mass of largely unimpeachable materials for illustrating his own life and the surroundings in which he lived.

Among these materials the most unique and valuable is the immense collection of the Pope's letters (dealing with almost every detail of papal administration, and written to all parts of the Christian world), of which a large proportion are

preserved. The Pope's correspondence was methodically copied out in an official register by duly appointed officials. This register is continually quoted in Gregory's letters; thus in one place he speaks of "*scrinium nostrum*," in another he says "*ab scrinio sanctae ecclesiae cui Deo auctore praesumus*,"[1] and in another he quotes "*ex codicibus et ex antiquis polypticis sanctae sedis apostolicae selecta.*"[2]

The particular method of entering these official copies of his own letters adopted by Gregory was, like many other things, introduced by the businesslike Pope, doubtless of his own devising. It is explained by John the Deacon, one of his biographers who had used his register diligently and knew it well. He says the register, which was written on papyrus, consisted of as many volumes as there were years in the Pope's reign (*tot chartisios libros epistolarum ejusdem patris* [*i.e.* of Gregory] *quot annos probatur vixisse revolvat*).[3] There were, in fact, thirteen full volumes and an imperfect one, comprising the transcripts of the last year which were not complete (*quartum decimum epistolarum librum septima indictionis imperfectum reliquit*).[4]

The letters were dated by indictions. Gregory was apparently the first Pope who so reckoned, and he adopted the oldest scheme, called the Constantinopolitan, which took the 1st of September for its starting-point in each year. The years

[1] *Ewald and Hartmann*, vol. ii. p. 355.
[2] *Ib.* ii. 446.
[3] Preface to the *Vita*.
[4] *Vit.* iv. 71.

were divided into cycles of fifteen. Gregory's first year formed the ninth of an indiction, and his eighth the first of another indiction, of which the last book formed the seventh year.[1] The original register as well as a copy of it which once existed were both long ago destroyed, and unfortunately the extracts from them which remain are extracts only, and a large number of the letters in the original register are lost. The Pope himself refers to seventy-seven of them in his works which are no longer extant.[2]

Fortunately before this disaster happened they had been in part excerpted by several writers. The first to do so, as far as we know, was Nothelm, a learned priest of the diocese of London, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 735. Having visited Rome, he was permitted by the then Pope to examine and copy from the register of the Roman Church (*ab S. Ecclesiae Romanae scrinio*) some of the letters of Pope Gregory, together with those of other Popes, which he brought back with him to be used in Bede's great work which was then in progress (*nobis nostrae historiae inserendas . . . adhibit*).[3] The letters sent to Bede were apparently limited to those written by Gregory about St. Augustine's mission, and those sent to the members of the mission or to the English rulers. It has not been remarked that the originals of these letters should

[1] See Ewald and Hartmann, *Gr. I. Pap. Registrum Epistolare*, *passim*; and Bright, *Early English Church History*, p. 48, note 5.

[2] *Pitra de Epp. R. P.* p. 52; Mann's *Hist. of the Popes*, i. 246.

[3] See *Bede*, i. 6.

at this time have been preserved at Canterbury; nor has it been explained how it came about that there was any necessity for Nothelm to make copies of other copies of them then at Rome.

In the year following Bede's death, namely, in 735, St. Boniface wrote to Nothelm asking him to send him a copy of a certain epistle (namely, that containing Augustine's questions with the Pope's Responsions) which he had doubtless read in Bede's work, since he says the registrars declared that it could not be found in the register containing the other letters (*quia in Scrinio Romanae ecclesiae, ut adfirmant scrinarii, cum ceteris exemplaribus infradicti pontificis quaesita non inveniabatur.*[1]

This extract from Boniface is interesting, since it shows that at this time either the Pope's registers had been tampered with and some of them removed, or else that the particular document had never been entered in the register at all. As we shall see, it had to be prepared rapidly and sent off in a hurry, and it may be there was no time to copy it, but its character makes it quite possible that it may have been found convenient to make away with it. This is not the only letter relating to the English mission which occurs in Bede but is not given in any of the excerpts from Gregory's registers which are extant.[2] Another purports to be addressed to Mellitus, who was with the members of the second mission sent from Rome, and was also

[1] *Bon. Ep. M. G.* 284.
[2] See *E. and H.* vol. i. 425, note.

written in a hurry and dispatched after they had left the City. This may be the reason for its not occurring in the registers, or it may be because it contains some instructions about preserving instead of destroying the heathen temples and converting them to Christian uses, which may not have been acceptable to the later authorities at Rome.

In a subsequent letter of St. Boniface to Ecgbert, Archbishop of Canterbury,[1] he tells him he had sent two agents to Rome to consult the papal registers, and that he was sending him a selection of such of St. Gregory's letters as had not yet reached England (*quae non rebar ad Britanniam venisse*), and that he would send him more if he needed them, for he had had many excerpted.

Let us now turn to the extant collections of the letters. These occur in three sets of MSS., each containing a special series. One of them is labelled C by Ewald. It contains two hundred letters and occurs in several MSS., one dating as far back as the eighth century. It is anonymous and contains no hint as to its origin, but it is possible that it represents the abstracts made by Boniface as above mentioned. This is supported by the fact that three of its oldest MSS., including the oldest one of the eighth century, are in German collections; only two occurring elsewhere. It is further supported by the fact that this collection never occurs alone, but in conjunction with a second one, which can also be traced to a German source, and which is

[1] *Bon. Ep. M. G.* iii. 347.

labelled P by Ewald. The two collections are separately grouped, however, Ewald says they were originally separate and had different origins. It is also well to remember that collection C is notable for the number of letters concerning the Lombards which it contains.

Ewald named the second collection, which contains fifty-three or fifty-four letters, P, because the oldest MS. of it extant[1] is preserved at St. Petersburg. It is preceded by a letter written by a certain Paul to Adalhard, Abbot of Corbey, in which he expressed his regret at not having been able to go and see him the previous year. As we know that Paul Warnefrid, the biographer of Pope Gregory, was on the Moselle on 10th January probably in 783,[2] it makes it very probable that it was in fact this Lombard writer who wrote the letter to Adalhard signed Paul. Ewald's doubts on the subject[3] seem to be answered by Hartmann.[4] Two of the MSS. of this class date from the eighth century. So far as I know, no suspicion attaches to either of these collections, except in one case to be presently mentioned, of a letter in P. They seem to be *bona fide* and accurate transcripts

[1] This MS. was once at St. Germain dès Pres, No. 858. It is now at St. Petersburg and is numbered F. I. 7. See Ewald and Hartmann, *Register*, vol. ii. xvi, and following.

[2] *Dict. of Christian Biography*, iv. 275.

[3] *Epist. Greg. II.* xvi.

[4] *Ib.* 26. In the *Gesch. der Lat. Lit. des Mitt.*, by Max Manitius, published in 1911 in J. Muller's great *Handbuch*, p. 106, this opinion is upheld. Of the Paul in the MS. it is there said: "*Zweifellos identisch mit Paulus Diaconus.*"

from the registers of a selection from Gregory's letters.

Let us now turn to a much larger collection. John the Deacon tells us in his biography of Gregory that in the time of Pope Hadrian certain decretal epistles were excerpted under several indictions and were duly arranged in two volumes (*ex quarum multitudine primi Hadriani papae temporibus, quaedam epistulae decretales per singulas indictiones excerptae sunt et in duobus voluminibus sicut modo cernitur congregatae*).[1] This great excerpt, as Ewald says, was doubtless made for the Emperor Charlemagne at the instance of Pope Hadrian himself, as appears from a sentence in a letter of the Pope's to the Emperor written in 794,[2] reading thus: "*Meminit enim vestra praerectissima regalis praecelsa scientia qualiter in ipsa S. Gregorii papae epistola Sereno episcopo Massiliensi directa*[3] *fertus infra cetera contineri ubi eundem episcopum increpans inquit: Aliud enim est picturam adorare.*" Of this excerpt several MSS. are extant, some of which date from the tenth century and three from the ninth, two of the latter being fragments (the archetype sent to Charlemagne is no longer extant). This collection was labelled R by Ewald. It contains 686 letters. The fact that it is only in Class R that the letter of Serenus just named occurs, shows that it really represents Hadrian's collection.

In the twelfth century a more general collection

[1] *Vit. Greg.* iv. 71. [2] *Epist.* v. 55.
[3] *Gregory's Register*, ix. 208.

of Gregory's letters was compiled by combining the other three just named. In it the letters were arranged very arbitrarily. As we have seen, we have no MS. of Hadrian's collection dating from the time of the first compilation of R, nor probably from any date very near that time, and unfortunately the beginning of the ninth century was a time when sophistications and forgeries were common, and it would seem very probable that the various MSS. of R which have reached us were more or less interpolated.

In the first place, they contain a number of documents which are not letters of the Pope, and which, although probably genuine, cannot well have come from the papal registers, and which in the Benedictine edition are put in appendices to the several books. Several of these have been inserted by Ewald and Hartmann in the text of their edition. These last include lib. ii., numbers 1 and 2, the former of which is an abstract from a document dating from after the Pope's death, and referring back to his reign, for it begins "*Temporibus papae Gregorii.*" The second is a kind of instruction in regard to a litany to be sung in procession when going from the church of St. Laurence in Lucino to the Vatican, and which was apparently based on one used at the Church of St. Maria Maggiore.

The next is in *E. and H.* iii. 66, and is not a letter of the Pope, but an answer to such a letter written by John, Bishop of Ravenna.

The next document of a similar class is that numbered v. 57*a* by Ewald and Hartmann, and which contains the Acts of the Synod held by Pope Gregory on 5th July 595.

The next is numbered by the same authors as viii. 36. Of it Hartmann says in a note: "*in registro non fuisse crediderim.*" It is apparently an extract from some chronicle or other writing, and in it the Pope is referred to in the third person.

The next is numbered xi. 15. This document is a suspicious one. Maurice became Emperor in August 582, and it is dated in the nineteenth year of Maurice, *i.e.* 601 A.D., which is equated with his seventeenth consulship. This is equated again with the third of the Nones of October in the fourth indiction, that is, 5th October 600, which is the date accepted by Ewald and Hartmann, so that the two dates are inconsistent. In it a certain Probus is made abbot of two monasteries, namely, those of St. Andrew and St. Lucian, which was quite irregular unless this was a double dedication, nor is there a place for him among the abbots of St. Andrew's on the Caelian at this time. The terms and purpose of the document also seem very doubtful.

The next is numbered xii. 7, and has nothing to do apparently with Gregory, but is merely an abjuration of heresy by some bishop whose name is not given.

The next is *E. and H.* xiii. 1, and refers back,

temporibus domini et beatissimi papae Gregorii, i.e. it was written after his death. It refers to the coronation of the Emperor Phocas and the events which followed it, and, like ii. 1, was probably derived from some historical or annalistic work.

In addition to these documents, which have the appearance of being genuine but do not directly refer to Pope Gregory, and were perhaps interpolated in the collection made at the instance of Pope Hadrian, there are a number of others which seem to be fabrications and to have been interpolated in later copies of that collection. Thus in *E. and H.* ix. 227*a* is a letter purporting to have been addressed in 599 by Reccared, King of the Visigoths, to Gregory, in which he gives him very belated information about his own conversion. Gams[1] and Mommsen both reject this letter, largely on the ground of the rusticity of its Latin, etc. It will be remembered that Reccared had some excellent scholars at his Court. Its contents seem to entirely justify the two critics. In it the King is made to address the Pope as the Holy Lord and most blessed Pope Gregory the Bishop (*Domino Sancto ac Beatissimo Papae Gregorio Episcopo*), and speaks of him as superior to all other bishops (*qui prae ceteros polles antestites*), a very suspicious phrase. In this letter the King professes to send the Pope a gold-bejewelled cup.[2] It has been argued by Mommsen that the letter was concocted from

[1] *Kirchen Geschichte v. Spanien*, II. ii. p. 47, note.
[2] See *E. and H.* ix. 227 *.

the one next mentioned, and numbered 228 by Ewald and Hartmann, which professes to be an answer to a letter from Reccared. The annals of monasticism are pervaded from early times with a continual tendency to sophisticate and forge documents, and thus to secure exemptions and privileges, etc. etc. A notable case is associated with the name of Gregory. The MS. was discovered by Baronius in the Vatican, and purports to be an edict or constitution issued by a synod of Gregory's bishops in 601, and confers virtually complete independence of episcopal control on certain monasteries, and the bishops are made in it to divest themselves of their powers in the most cheerful way. The document has taken in a great many people, and notably Dr. Barmby. It is published in Appendix vii. to Migne's edition of the letters. It was largely concocted from another grant of privileges made by Gregory to the Monastery of St. John and St. Stephen, at Classis.[1] In a note to this last-quoted letter we read in Ewald and Hartmann, "*Ex hoc epistula magna pars falsi privilegii*, I.E. *1366* (998), *confecta est.*"[2]

A number of letters of a suspicious character occur in the thirteenth book of Gregory's correspondence as published by Ewald and Hartmann, and are numbered by these authors 7, 9, 11, 12, and 13. They form a group all relating to privileges of a very extravagant kind, professedly

[1] See *E. and H.* viii. 17.

[2] Cf. Wisbaum, *loc. cit.* p. 375; see also Dudden, ii. 186, note.

conferred on certain foundations at Autun by the Pope, at the instance of the founders of the institutions, namely, Brunichildis, her grandson Theodoric, and Bishop Syagrius. All five documents are professedly dated on the same day, namely, 2nd November 602.

It arouses suspicion that although this is the case they do not occur in a continuous series, but they are separated by two other letters dealing with entirely different matters, respectively numbered 8 and 10.

They are all contained in the collection labelled R by Ewald, in which they occur, as they do in Ewald and Hartmann's transcripts, with a broken continuity. Either the transcript of the letters in the collection R did not follow the index of the original Lateran register, or else we should have the odd fact that a group of letters written on one day and dealing with one subject should be separated by interpolated letters or other matters, which seems very improbable.

Several of these letters have been rejected as forgeries, or as containing interpolations by some excellent authorities.[1] Their arguments seem to me conclusive, and I prefer to abide by their results. The documents seem to me in their whole tenor and extravagance to point to the ninth or tenth century rather than the beginning of the seventh, for the period of their compilation, and in this I cannot

[1] *Inter alios*, Lannoy, *Opp.* v. 2, p. 445; Sickel, *in Actis Acad. Vind.* vol. 47, p. 566; and Loening, *Gesch. d. Deutsch Kirchenrechtes*, ii. p. 392, note 2.

follow the very special pleading of Mr. Dudden, who on most matters relating to Gregory I am prepared to dutifully follow.

In the Benedictine edition of the papal letters are two which do not occur in Ewald and Hartmann's work, nor are they referred to in it. In the former edition they are numbered book xiv. 16 and 17. The first one is addressed by Felix, Bishop of Messina, to the Pope, but the date makes the document impossible, for Felix had been succeeded by Donus as Bishop of Messina in the fourteenth indiction.[1] At that date Gregory's reply to Augustine's interrogatories, which is the main subject of the letter, had not been sent, nor did Augustine arrive in Britain till 597. Donus is last mentioned in the sixteenth indiction in Ep. 18 of book xiii.,[2] and the letter can only be supported by the quite arbitrary suggestion made by Dr. Barmby, that a second Felix succeeded Donus, of whom we otherwise know nothing, nor do we in fact know when Donus died.

A very notable case of spurious interpolations is afforded by another letter,[3] which contains in some copies a long passage printed by Hartmann in small type. The interpolation does not occur in collections C and R but only in P, and there according to the same writer "*postea adnexa esse videtur.*" It occurs in some of the collections of canons, and notably in the pseudo-Isidorian de-

[1] *i.e.* A.D. 595 and 596; *E. and H.* vi. 8, 9.
[2] *i.e.* in 602 and 603. [3] *E. and H.* ix. 147.

cretals. The first mention of it occurs in Hadrian's epistle to Charlemagne in 794, but Hartmann argues that the interpolation had already taken place in the year 769.[1] It is also quoted by Rabanus Maurus.[2] The passage in question makes it appear that Gregory was in favour of granting restitution to lapsed priests who had committed grievous faults, a view entirely contrary to his real sentiments, and which could only have been composed when discipline had become very lax. Thus in the fourth book, letter 26, Gregory rebukes Bishop Januarius for having recalled lapsed priests who had either done penance or harm before, to the ministry, "which is a thing," he says, "we have altogether forbidden, and which is also against the sacred canons," and he insists that such lapsed priests should never again approach the altar.[3]

In this letter Felix is made to say that news had been brought by some persons coming from Rome "that you had written to our comrade Augustine (afterwards ordained Bishop for the nation of the Angli, and sent thither by Your Holiness) and to the Angli, that persons related in the fourth degree of descent, if married, should not be separated." He goes on to say that "such was not the custom when I was taught and brought up with you in infancy," nor, he adds, had he heard of it from his predecessors, or in the institutes of the

[1] See the discussion of the matter in the notes to the epistle in *E. and H.*

[2] *Lib. paen.* ch. 1.

[3] See also v. 18, and vii. 39, etc.

wise, nor had it been anywhere permitted, but on the contrary it was clear that the prohibition should extend to the seventh degree. He asks, therefore, whether what he had written to Augustine and the nation of the Angli was written specially to them, or generally to all, and wishes to be fully informed on the whole matter. This letter seems to me to stand or fall with the next one[1] which professes to be the answer of the Pope, of which Barmby says: "The genuineness of this epistle is, to say the least, open to grave suspicion." Jaffé[2] rejects it as spurious. While its style in places resembles Gregory's, its prolixity, bad composition, and repetitions are unworthy of his pen. Its origin may be explained by the desire of the authorities to vindicate the teaching of the Roman Church on the subject of marriages of consanguinity, which seemed to be compromised by Gregory's answer to Augustine on that subject. The excuse made in this letter is that the reply of Gregory was only meant as a temporary concession.[3]

Lastly, there is a document dated 28th December 587, published as Appendix i. in Ewald and Hartmann's great collection, which seems to me to present some serious difficulties. This again is not contained in any of the great excerpts of letters from Gregory above described, and was first published by Mitarelli in the *Annales Camaldolenses*, iv. c. 600 (App.). Ewald

[1] *i.e.* xiv. 17.
[2] *Regesta Pont. Lit. Spur.*
[3] See Barmby, *Epistles of Gregory*, 353, note.

and Hartmann give it from a Vatican MS. 5617 of the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and Hartmann compares it to another which he styles false, also published by Mitarelli. It professes to have been addressed by Gregory while still a deacon to Maximianus, who is styled in it "Abbot of the Monastery of St. Andrew the Apostle, situated on our property called Clivus Cauri" (*sic*). In it, although only a deacon, Gregory styles himself *servus servorum Dei*, which seems incredible. Although professing to be a conveyance, and attested as such, it is written in the form of a letter, while its phrases are those used, according to Hartmann, in later centuries. It professes to convey a very large property, which is described in detail with its appurtenances, which, if Gregory was then a monk, as is usually argued, he could not, according to his own very strict theories on the subject, have possessed at all, while, still more curiously, he retains the usufruct for himself. This is not all. There is a second letter, marked i. 14*a* by Ewald and dated at the close of 590, which is also absent from the various excerpts of the Gregorian register, and is printed from the register of the fourteenth year of Pope Gregory the Ninth,[1] and which Ewald claims that he has purged *a multis priorum editionum mendis*. This stands or falls with the last-cited document. In it he addresses the Abbot of St. Andrew, however, not as Maximianus, as he elsewhere occurs, but as Maximus, and says that he, Gregory, owed a debt to

[1] *i.e.* in 1240.

the community, since in it he adopted the monk's habit, etc. (*quod in eo monachicum habitum et conversandi sumpsi dierno*). The history of this document is most dubious. It refers to the property conveyed in the former document dated three years earlier (*loca vel praedia que ante has tres annos in suprascripto monasterio meo condonare visus sum*), which he professes to confirm as bishop. It does not occur separately, but as embodied in a professed confirmation by Gregory the Ninth, who in the initiatory clause speaks of it in the following very suspicious terms: "*Nuper in nostra presentia privilegium, a beatissimo Gregorio papa vestro concessum monasterio exhibentes nobis humiliter supplicastis, ut cum illud, quod est in papyro conscriptum, esset jam per nimia vetustate pene deletum, ipsum sub bulla nostra apostolicis annotari litteris, manderemus. Nos igitur . . . tenorem prefati privilegii presentibus fecimus de verbo ad verbum literis exarari,*" etc. It seems to me quite plain, for the reasons above given, that these two documents are spurious. The fact is of some importance, since it is upon one of the clauses of the last-cited letter that it has been argued in the face of many probabilities that Gregory was technically a monk.

The old and famous Benedictine edition of Gregory's works, to which several generations of scholars were indebted, has been superseded in so far as the correspondence of the Pope is concerned by that of Ewald and Hartmann, published in

the quarto section of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* in 1891 and 1893. Ewald discovered a key by which he was able to arrange the letters in approximately their original order, and with his colleague produced an admirable edition of them in which the text was properly collated with the MSS., and which contains a large number of illustrative notes, admirable indices, and a very useful table. In it the numbers of the letters in the Benedictine are put in juxtaposition with those in the later edition. I have continuously used and sometimes differed from the conclusions of the two editors, and have quoted their work as E. and H., with the year of the indiction and then the number of the letter. I have in many cases supplemented this work by references to the very scholarly edition and notes of Dr. Barmby in his translation of most of the important letters in the Library of Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers; but those who wish to really know the Pope must consult him in his inimitable epistolary Latin, which in its way is almost as attractive as Cicero's more finished and academic style. It often sparkles with vivacity, and shows a wonderful facility in dealing with a very idiomatic tongue.

We will now turn to Gregory's other works.

The most important of these, so far as the biography of the Pope is concerned, is his work on the lives of the Italian saints in four parts, known as his *Dialogues*. This work is referred to in a letter dated July 593, and written to Bishop

Maximianus of Syracuse.[1] In it he says: "*Fratres mihi qui mecum familiariter vivunt, omni modo me compellunt, aliqua de miracula patrum quae in Italia facta audivimus, sub brevitate scribere adquam sum . . . indigeo et quaeque vobis in memoriam redeunt, quaeque cognovisse vos contigit, mihi breviter indicatis . . . Et hoc ergo et si qua sunt alia tuis peto epistolis imprimis et mihi sub celeritate transmittis.*"

The work is styled *Dialogues* by the Pope, because it is couched in the form of a dialogue between himself and the Deacon Peter, who is made to ask a great many questions which are answered by the Pope with the easy patronage Dr. Johnson extended to Boswell. One book of these dialogues is devoted to St. Benedict and his Rule, and the others to a large number of Italian saints' lives, many of them filled with fantastic details, miracles, and wonders, and intermingled with the Pope's views on theological matters, and often with a picturesque surrounding which gives us many peeps at the condition of the people and the times and the then condition of Italy. The Pope apparently implicitly believes in the various legends he tells, and in the encounters with angels and devils and the panoramic outlook into hell and heaven which the stories present. He apparently knew many of those on whose testimony the tales were reported. The Benedictine edition of St. Gregory's works or the same work reprinted

[1] *E. and H.* i. 206.

in the more handy edition of Migne are the most useful sources for the *Dialogues*, which also occur in a seventeenth-century translation into quaint and delightful English made by a certain P. W., not otherwise known. I have sometimes borrowed from this racy translation, of which a new edition has been recently brought out by Mr. Edmund G. Gardner, annotated by my friend Mr. J. F. Hill.

From certain passages in the *Dialogues*[1] it would appear that the book was written in 593 or 594. Other reasons for this view are given in the work by Max Manitius above cited.[2] The book became exceedingly famous in the Middle Ages, and hardly any considerable library was without it, and, *inter alios*, the Pope presented a copy of it to his friend the Lombard Queen, Theodelinda. Pope Zacharias in the eighth century translated it into Greek, which was again translated into Arabic, the language, be it noted, of the Arabian Nights, and King Alfred had it translated by Werefrith, Bishop of Worcester.[3] It had a great influence on the Romantic literature of France, Italy, and Arabia, while it formed a fertile repertory whence the mediæval preachers drew illustrations for their sermons and the scholastic writers for their theological dialectics. It is full of naive and childish tales, many of them grotesque and some of them touching and beautiful, but they hardly

[1] iv. 26, iv. 36, and iii. 19.
[2] P. 103.
[3] Asser, *ad. an.* 884.

reconcile the reader to the thought that their author was a Doctor of the Church and an infallible Pope, yet he published these fairy tales (which were believed by himself and taught to others) as if they were true, and thus steeped the theology of the succeeding centuries with a great mass of crude materialism and paganism.[1]

Next to the *Dialogues* the most famous of Gregory's works was his great Commentary on Job known as the *Magna Moralia*, in which the vast Biblical memory of Gregory and his incorrigible habit of refining and allegorising and mystical interpretation are displayed at great length, and are intermixed with continuous outbursts of vivid moralising and the presentation of the highest standards of human endeavour, enforced in magnificent diction full of genuine piety. The book was written at the instance of Archbishop Leander of Seville.[2] It is contained in thirty-five books and in six codices or volumes. He sent a copy to Leander in 595 although it was not yet finished.[3] I have said more about this wonderful encyclopædia of moral teaching later on. Like the *Dialogues* it was found in almost every library, and was commented on and excerpted by many

[1] It is not pleasant to find a learned priest, while recently discussing these fables and trying to justify them, applying the phrase "the free-thinker Gregorovius" to a much greater scholar than himself, whose moderation and judgment and fairness are exhibited on every page of his monumental work, and who might have retorted with stinging bitterness if *tuquoques* ever came from the grave to reprove the impertinence of bigotry.

[2] See *E. and H.* i. 41 and 58.

[3] *Ib.* v. 53.

mediæval writers of eminence, notably by a contemporary of Gregory and described as his scholar, namely, Paterius, who wrote a *Liber Testimoniarum* collected from Gregory's works,[1] and it formed the basis of a book by the Spaniard Taio, entitled *Liber Sententiarum*, of which a copy existed in the Abbey of St. Wandrille in the ninth century. An English translation of the *Moralia* was published in four volumes by Mr. Marriott in the Library of the Fathers. Mr. Dudden has made most excellent use of the work in his account of Gregory's theology, which has in turn been most useful to myself. I cannot resist here quoting the fine words with which the great Pope closes his great work: "*Igitur quaeso ut quisquis haec legerit apud districtum judicem solatium mihi suae orationis impendebat et omne quod in me sordidum deprehendit fletibus diluat.*"

Another work of equally far-reaching influence was Gregory's great Manual of instructions for a bishop's office, entitled *Liber regulae pastoralis.*

In the first months of the Pope's career we find him writing "*feci ut librum regulae pastoralis quem in episcopatus mei exordio scripsi del . . . transmitterem.*"[2] In the year 600 we find Columban writing to Gregory that he knew the book. In 602 it was translated into Greek by Anastasius the Patriarch of Antioch.

The work existed in virtually every mediæval library. The most famous version of it was that

[1] See Manitius, *op. cit.* 98. [2] *E. and H.* v. 53.

made by our own King Alfred or under his immediate patronage, and of which he sent a copy to every cathedral in England.[1]

In addition to these works, Gregory also wrote homilies and commentaries on various Biblical books, of which the most famous were those on Ezekiel, upon which he was engaged, as we shall see, during the attack of the Lombard Agilulf on Rome. The work was, however, not definitely published till eight years later, when it appeared in two volumes, the first one dedicated to Marinian, Bishop of Ravenna, and the second to his friends the monks of St. Andrew's. The homilies are not so much exegetical as moral addresses.

Earlier than these homilies on Ezekiel, namely, in 590–91, Gregory had delivered forty other addresses on the Gospels, also divided into two volumes, of which he published more than one edition. Like his other works, these homilies were very widely read. They exist in many copies, and were much commented upon and translated or glossed in Old French, High German, etc. In one of his epistles Columban asks Gregory to send him the second part of these homilies.[2]

Mr. Mann says that many of the lectios or lessons in the Roman Breviary by all priests of the Latin rite are taken from St. Gregory's homilies.[3]

[1] See Sweet's edition, *Early English Text Society*, 1871. Archbishop Hincurar tells us that a copy of it was given to every bishop on his consecration with a book of Canons.

[2] See Manitius, 101, note. [3] *Hist. of the Popes*, i. 238, note.

In addition to these works, some others, either not now existing or attributed to him by mistake, occur in lists, among them being commentaries on the Song of Solomon, the Books of Kings, and the Penitential Psalms. Manitius thinks the statement about one of the latter was based on a misunderstanding of an ambiguous sentence of Columban's in one of his letters, in which he writes : "*transmitte et Cantica Canticorum ab illo, loco . . . aut aliorum aut tuis brevibus, deposco tracta sententiis.*"

The amount of mental activity displayed in Gregory's works here referred to (which it must be remembered was compressed into little more than fourteen years) would be astounding in anybody, but when we consider that it was all done virtually in the leisure of a most strenuous life, when he carried on his shoulders the whole administration and diplomacy of the Papal See in most critical times, it really becomes phenomenal.

Let us now turn to other materials for the life of Gregory and the history of his times outside his own works.

The first of these to be noted is the so-called *Liber Pontificalis*, or register of the acts and doings of the Popes, containing for the most part mere lists of the churches and other monuments erected by each Pope, and the artistic works presented by them to various churches (these were doubtless copies from official registers), a statement as to each Pope's paternity and birthplace, with the dates of the birth and death of each, and copies of

their epitaphs. In the case of certain Popes there are in addition statements about particular acts of a striking kind performed by the particular Pope or affecting the Church; generally told in a very dry and otiose way.

Of this work two admirable editions have appeared in recent years by two very competent editors, Duchesne and Mommsen, the former of which is illuminated by a large number of notes, and is the one I have followed. The book was until recently treated as the handiwork of Anastasius, the Librarian of the Vatican, who lived in the ninth century, and it was universally quoted by his name. It is now agreed that he had probably to do only with the life of Pope Nicholas the First. As it stands, it has been shown to be a re-edited text containing additions and interpolations. The original nucleus of the work or first edition is no longer extant intact, and there is a difference of opinion between the two learned editors above named as to when it was first compiled. Duchesne dates it about the reign of Boniface the Second, who died in 532, while he assigns the second edition to Pope Vigilius, who died in 555. Mommsen dates the first edition after the reign of St. Gregory, and the second some time before the accession of Sergius the First, 687–701. Both hold that the short lives of the seventh-century Popes were written by contemporary writers, and this applies to that of St. Gregory. It is interesting to remember that the work occurs among the sources of Bede, who cites it as *Gesta*

Pontificalis.[1] He probably derived his knowledge of its statements from a transcript of certain parts of it by his friend Nothelm.

The first outside these authorities to write a notice of Gregory (unfortunately a very short one) was Gregory of Tours, 573–94, a contemporary of his great namesake, who, however, died before the Pope. His deacon was at Rome, as we shall see, when the great pestilence raged there which killed Pope Gregory's predecessor, and he reported what he had seen and heard to his master, by whom the information was incorporated in his famous book on the history of the Franks, which has been by my side continually.

Two other very nearly contemporary authors were the Spaniards Isidore, Archbishop of Seville, who died in 636, and Ildefonsus, Archbishop of Toledo, who died in 667, each of whom wrote a book of lives of illustrious men. Both include a short notice of Gregory which is largely a panegyric. The most accessible collection of these works is to be found in Migne's *Patrologia.*

We must now turn to an English work which had been long lost and was discovered in the library of the Monastery of St. Gallen by Dr. Paul Ewald, the joint editor of the great collection of St. Gregory's letters already described. The MS. was in the St. Gallen library as early as the first years of the ninth century, for it occurs in the famous catalogue of books preserved there of that date. It is doubt-

[1] *Vide Op.* iv. 105, and x. 251.

less a copy, since it is very corrupt and in parts unintelligible. The author habitually speaks like an Englishman (he in fact describes himself as of the *gens Anglorum*), and speaks of the time "*quo gens Anglorum hanc ingreditur insulam.*" He was also a Northumbrian, and writes *in gente nostra qui dicitur Humbrensium*, refers to King Ædwin as "*rex noster*" and speaks of the Deiri whom Gregory is said to have seen at Rome as "*de nostra natione.*" He was further a monk of Whitby, and when King Ædwin's bones were transported thither he says: "*ad hoc nostrum secum apportavit coenobium.*"

The earlier part of the work is devoted to an account of St. Gregory and his miracles, and for some of the most famous of these he is our first authority. He calls Gregory *magister noster*, *doctor noster*, *apostolicus noster*, *papa noster*, *noster Gregorius*, and says of him: "*nostrum propagavit conversionem fidem nostram primo refecit.*"

The latter part of the tract is taken up with certain references to events that occurred in Northumbria. The last of these reported in this life is the translation of St. Ædwin's bones, which were discovered in consequence of the dream of a Presbyter named Trimma, as the writer had learnt from a relative of the latter. This translation Ewald puts between 675 and 704, so that the life was probably written at the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century. He considers that it is certainly older

further that all the MSS. which he had seen, as well as those mentioned by the Bollandists and Canisius, are anonymous. They either style the book simply *Vita Sancti Gregorii* or *Vita Sancti Gregorii, auctore incerto*, and none ascribe it to Paul.[1] The Bollandists also print it as anonymous.

The contents of the work seem to me to be inconsistent with its having been written by Paul Warnefrid. It is a very poor production, and contains hardly anything original; not only so, but as we have seen Paul had had a considerable selection of the original letters of Gregory made, not one of which is utilised in this work in any way. On the other hand, in his work on the history of the Lombards he inserts three of Gregory's letters in full and part of a third.[2] This shows he had access to the register or to some extract from it, and he would assuredly have availed himself of it in writing the Pope's life. Other difficulties also exist, and it has been suggested that the work as we have it is largely interpolated. Bethmann, in fact, showed that in one copy of it these supposed interpolations are not present. This is MS. Cheltenham 8462, s. x. and xi.

This copy of the work seems to represent the first edition. It largely follows the life of the Whitby Monk, and was mainly taken from it or from a common source. The other copies I take

[1] See Hardy's *Catalogue*, i. p. 203, note.

[2] These are *E. and H.* ix. 66, 67, and 126, and v. 6.

to represent a later edition, in which much of the new matter has been incorporated from Bede. I therefore am forced to conclude that the original life of Gregory by Paul is lost, and that the life passing under his name is probably an earlier work whose compiler had very few materials available. I have to confess that when writing the text of this book I was under the impression, shared by virtually all the modern authorities, that the life was the genuine work of Paul. I have used it very seldom.

A century later we have a much longer and more important, but unfortunately more uncritical, life of Gregory, written at the instance of Pope John the Eighth, 872–82. The author explains in his preface that although lives of the Pope had been written by the Angles and the Lombards, yet none existed among the Romans themselves. He had, in consequence, received permission to examine the papal archives, and a large part of his work is, as he says, drawn from the Pope's letters and other works. He also collected many traditions and legends not otherwise accessible, and used his position, as was then thought right in a Church historian, for polemical purposes. Mr. Dudden's sound judgment sums his work up well. He says John is an inaccurate historian, apt to draw unwarrantable inferences, and given to repeating unauthenticated traditions as though they were verified history. Hence, when his testimony conflicts with that of other authorities, it may, un-

less strong reasons appear to the contrary, with safety be rejected.[1]

Turning to the modern works on Gregory, the Benedictine life attached to the great collection of his works by the Fathers of that Order is a careful conspectus of the facts written with great fairness, and I have occasionally found it useful. It is, however, now displaced by more modern lives, the criticism in which applied to St. Gregory's works has been utilised and incorporated in the following pages. Another recent life of the Pope, also written by a Roman Catholic, and showing considerable learning and research, is marred by its highly polemical character, its continual special pleading and reticence in the presence of difficult matters where the credit of the Church is involved, and its offensive tone to other and greater scholars who do not belong to the author's Church. It is contained in Father Mann's *History of the Popes*.

A much more important work, which is a fine monument of English scholarship and must necessarily remain the definite and standard life of the great Pope, is that written by the Rev. F. H. Dudden, occupying two lordly volumes. It has put all other works on the subject in any language in the shade, and is quite indispensable to the student. I have profited greatly by it, and although I have not been able always to agree with its author, it has been my constant companion. I have further been tempted in a few cases to appropriate

[1] Dudden's *Gregory*, Preface, xiii.

from it a fine piece of stately English, in which Mr. Dudden has painted some scene in the tragedy of history in a way that I felt could not be improved.

Another English scholar who has done much to throw light on the earlier centuries of Church history is Dr. Barmby. To him we owe a short and pregnant life of St. Gregory, but above all an admirable translation of nearly all his more important letters contained in the Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.[1] This work is accompanied by many learned and very illuminating notes, and has been most useful to me.

The great work on Rome by Gregorovius (whom Father Mann apostrophises as "the free-thinker Gregorovius") is a monument of erudition and careful scholarship. I have used and quoted from the Italian edition, which contains a considerable quantity of new notes and some corrections, and, above all, is resplendent with fine illustrations.

I have also had continually by me another monument of learning and careful research, of which, most unfortunately, only the first volume has been published. This is the Jesuit Father Grisar's fine monograph on *Rome at the Close of the Ancient World.* This also I have quoted from the Italian edition.

In the discussion of the difficult question of the Gregorian music, I have, by the advice of my very competent friend Mr. Squire, followed the lead

[1] New Series, vols. xii. and xiii.

of two most excellent writers in Grove's *Dictionary of Music*, namely, Mr. W. S. Rockstro and the Rev. W. H. Frere.

In matters of ritual and Gregory's influence on the service-books of the Church, I have relied on Duchesne in his work on Christian Worship, which I have quoted from the English edition.

I am also indebted for help in special matters to two distinguished historians and friends of mine, Dr. Hodgkin, the author of the classical work on *The Invaders of Italy*, and to Professor Bury, who has so excellently edited Gibbon and has written a very noteworthy work on the *History of the Later Roman Empire.*

Lastly, it has always been a strong support to me when I have found myself sheltering behind the strong good sense, moderation, and prudent judgment of Dean Milman, in his *History of Latin Christianity*, a book that is much too little read and appreciated in our day.

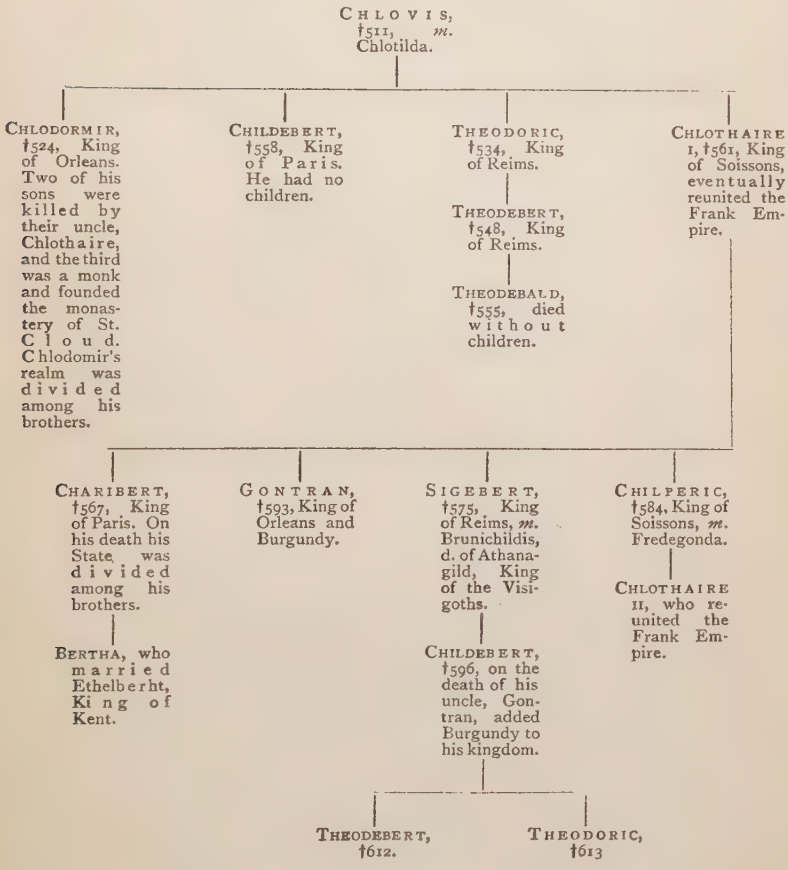
A word or two now about more domestic aid. I wish to thank my two accomplished sons, Rupert and Humfrey, both of them with sharper eyes than their father, for reading proofs and other help.

I must also remember some others who are often forgotten—my old friend Mr. John Murray, who has lent me the great help of his name as an umbrella under which to take shelter, and has treated me with great generosity. Another friend, Mr. C. E. Lawrence, has also been most helpful

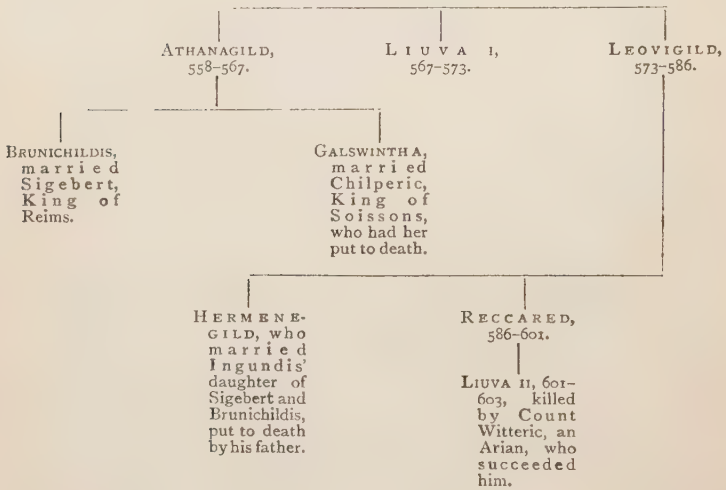
in the intricate duty of steering my book through the breakers that attend the launch of all such ventures. I hope they will not be ashamed of my book, and that the sun will always shine brightly upon them.

H. H. H.

THE DESCENDANTS OF CHLOVIS, KING OF THE FRANKS.


CHLOVIS, †511, m. Chlotilda.
CHLODORMIR, †524, King of Orleans. Two of his sons were killed by their uncle, Chlothaire, and the third was a monk and founded the monastery of St. Cloud. Chlodomir's realm was divided among his brothers.
CHILDEBERT, †558, King of Paris. He had no children.
THEODORIC, †534, King of Reims.
THEODEBERT, †548, King of Reims.
THEODEBALD, †555, died without children.
CHLOTHAIRE I, †561, King of Soissons, eventually reunited the Frank Empire.
CHARIBERT, †567, King of Paris. On his death his State was divided among his brothers.
BERTHA, who married Ethelberht, King of Kent.
GONTRAN, †593, King of Orleans and Burgundy.
SIGEBERT, †575, King of Reims, m. Brunichildis, d. of Athanagild, King of the Visigoths.
CHILDEBERT, †596, on the death of his uncle, Gontran, added Burgundy to his kingdom.
THEODEBERT, †612.
THEODORIC, †613
CHILPERIC, †584, King of Soissons, m. Fredegonda.
CHLOTHAIRE II, who reunited the Frank Empire.

THE VISIGOTHIC KINGS OF SPAIN IN THE TIME OF ST. GREGORY.


ATHANAGILD, 558–567.
LIUVA I, 567–573.
LEOVIGILD, 573–586.
BRUNICHILDIS, married Sigebert, King of Reims.
GALSWINTHA, married Chilperic, King of Soissons, who had her put to death.
HERMENEGILD, who married Ingundis' daughter of Sigebert and Brunichildis, put to death by his father.
RECCARED, 586–601.
LIUVA II, 601–603, killed by Count Witteric, an Arian, who succeeded him.

THE FIVE PATRIARCHATES DURING ST. GREGORY'S CAREER.

Popes of Rome.	Constantinople.	Alexandria.	Antioch.	Jerusalem.
	565. John Scholasticus.	569. { John IV. (orthodox). Damianus (Jacobite).	569. Gregory.	
574. Benedict the First.	574. ,,	574. ,,	574. ,,	574. John IV.
575. ,,	575. ,,	575. ,,	575. ,,	575. ,,
576. ,,	576. ,,	576. ,,	576. ,,	576. ,,
577. ,,	577. Eutychius restored.	577. ,,	577. ,,	577. ,,
578. Pelagius II.	578. ,,	578. ,,	578. ,,	578. ,,
579. ,,	579. ,,	579. ,,	579. ,,	579. ,,
580. ,,	580. ,,	580. Eulogius (orthodox).	580. ,,	580. ,,
581. ,,	581. ,,	581. ,,	581. ,,	581. ,,
582. ,,	582. John the Faster.	582. ,,	582. ,,	582. ,,
583. ,,	583. ,,	583. ,,	583. ,,	583. ,,
584. ,,	584. ,,	584. ,,	584. ,,	584. ,,
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589. ,,	589. ,,	589. ,,	589. ,,	589. ,,
590. Gregory the Great.	590. ,,	590. ,,	590. ,,	590. ,,
591. ,,	591. ,,	591. ,,	591. ,,	591. ,,
592. ,,	592. ,,	592. ,,	592. ,,	592. ,,
593. ,,	593. ,,	593. ,,	593. Abdication of Gregory, and restoration of Anastasius I.	593. ,,
594. ,,	594. ,,	594. ,,	594. ,,	594. Amos.
595. ,,	595. Cyriacus.	595. ,,	595. ,,	595. ,,
596. ,,	596. ,,	596. ,,	596. ,,	596. ,,
597. ,,	597. ,,	597. ,,	597. ,,	597. ,,
598. ,,	598. ,,	598. ,,	598. Anastasius II.	598. ,,
599. ,,	599. ,,	599. ,,	599. ,,	599. ,,
600. ,,	600. ,,	600. ,,	600. ,,	600. ,,
601. ,,	601. ,,	601. ,,	601. ,,	601. Isaac.
602. ,,	602. ,,	602. ,,	602. ,,	602. ,,
603. ,,	603. ,,	603. ,,	603. ,,	603. ,,
604. Sabinianus.	604. ,,	604. ,,	604. ,,	604. ,,

SECULAR RULERS IN ITALY DURING ST. GREGORY'S CAREER.

Emperors of Byzantium.	Exarchs of Ravenna.	Kings of the Lombards.
565. Justin Second.		
566. ,,		
567. ,,		
568. ,,		568. Alboin.
569. ,,	569. Longinus.	569. ,,
570. ,,	570. ,,	570. ,,
571. ,,	571. ,,	571. ,,
572. ,,	572. ,,	572. Cleophis.
573. ,,	573. ,,	573. ,,
574. ,,	574. ,,	574. Usurpation of the Dukes.
575. ,,	575. ,,	575. ,,
576. ,,	576. ,,	576. ,,
577. ,,	577. ,,	577. ,,
578. Tiberius Constantine.	578. ,,	578. ,,
579. ,,	579. ,,	579. ,,
580. ,,	580. ,,	580. ,,
581. ,,	581. ,,	581. ,,
582. Maurice.	582. ,,	582. ,,
583. ,,	583. ,,	583. ,,
584. ,,	584. Smaragdus.	584. Autharis.
585. ,,	585. ,,	585. ,,
586. ,,	586. ,,	586. ,,
587. ,,	587. Romanus.	587. ,,
588. ,,	588. ,,	588. ,,
589. ,,	589. ,,	589. ,,
590. ,,	590. ,,	590. Agilulf.
591. ,,	591. ,,	591. ,,
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596. ,,	596. ,,	596. ,,
597. ,,	597. ,,	597. ,,
598. ,,	598. Callinicus.	598. ,,
599. ,,	599. ,,	599. ,,
600. ,,	600. ,,	600. ,,
601. ,,	601. ,,	601. ,,
602. Phocas.	602. ,,	602. ,,

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SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT

CHAPTER I

GREGORY THE FIRST, who was Pope from 590 to 604 A.D., is altogether perhaps the most important figure in the long roll of Roman pontiffs. The epithet Great, which is usually attached to his name, is a measure of the scale by which he has been tested by history. He had the further unusual distinction of having been one of the four Senior Doctors of the Latin Church; the others being St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome. He was also the first ascetic to become Pope, which in itself marks a notable departure in the history of Christianity. As Montalembert reminds us, he shared with Pope Leo the First the distinction of having been styled both Saint and Great. He may be considered as the real founder of the Papacy, in the sense of its being a great political factor, as well as a religious one, in European affairs, and he looms very big across the ages as a politician, a reformer, a controversialist, and a practical man of business, ubiquitous, and full of zeal and energy, and also of good sense. Perhaps the greatest compliment one could pay him would be to repeat some of the sentences

in which Gibbon, who had few good words to say of popes, and prelates, and priests, is constrained to speak of Gregory. He sneers at his credulity, but he highly applauds the man and the politician, and describes his reign as one of the most edifying periods of the history of the Church.

To us Englishmen he must always be a particularly interesting person. Bede says: "It becomes us to speak at greater length about him, since he converted our English race from the power of Satan to the faith of Christ . . . hence, while not an apostle to others he is so to us, and we are the sign of his Apostleship."[1] The Council of Clovesho, 747 A.D., prescribes that the day of the Nativity of "Our Pope and Father Gregory" should be always duly observed.[2] Aldhelm calls him "our ever-watchful shepherd and teacher" (*pervigil pastor et paedagogus noster*),[3] and Alcuin styles him *praedicator noster*, "our preacher."[4]

Assuredly he deserves tender and continual solicitude at the hands of English students.

In regard to another matter I cannot do better than take a sentence from the admirable Monograph on St. Gregory by Mr. F. Homes Dudden, an indispensable work from which I shall freely quote, where he says: "In respect of the history of the doctrine of the English Church, Gregory's theology is of particular interest. For the system of dogma which was introduced into our island by

[1] *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 1.
[2] Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 368.
[3] *De laud. Virg.* 55.
[4] Mon. Alc. 367.

Augustine was the system elaborated by Augustine's revered master."[1]

In his *Dialogues*, iv. 16, and his Homily *in Ev.* 38, Gregory speaks of Pope Felix as his ancestor (*atavus*),[2] and it has been much debated as to which Felix it was. Grisar (whom I quote in the enlarged Italian edition) has made it very probable that it was Pope Felix the Third. He alone among the Popes of the name is known to have been married and to have had a family. He was Pope from 483 to 494, and was the only Pope who was buried in the Basilica of St. Paul outside the walls. There, as we learn from their epitaphs, were also buried his wife Petronia (*levitae conjunx, forma pudoris*), whom he had married before taking the higher orders, his daughter, Paula, who is styled a charming woman (*clarissima femina*), and his young son, Gordian (*dulcissimus puer*), *i.e.* "a most sweet boy." The last two died in 484 and 485 respectively. A third member of his family, also buried in the same Basilica, was named Aemiliana, and is styled a holy virgin (*sacra virgo*). She was consecrated to God in 489. The recurrence of the names Gordian and Aemiliana among the near relatives of Pope Gregory seems to make it pretty certain that it was Felix the Third from whom he claimed descent.[3] Both Gregory's

[1] *Op. cit.* Preface, vii.

[2] The word is clearly here used in a general sense. See Smith, Stevenson, and Plummer, *Bede, ad loc.*

[3] See Grisar, *Roma alla fine Storia Roma, etc.*, i. pp. 365 and 366. This was also the view of Baronius. John the Deacon, who is given to making mistakes, identifies Leo's ancestor with Felix the Fourth,

biographers, Paul and John, tell us he belonged to a senatorial family. Later writers say specifically that this family was the famous Anicia gens (which gave at least one remarkable name to literature in the person of Boëthius, several consuls to Old Rome, and two popes, and, perhaps, St. Benedict to the Church); but this theory was probably an invention of a later age.[1] The Anglian monk's Life of Gregory says his family was not only noble, but religious (*nobilis secundum legem, sed nobilior corde coram Deo in religione*). His father was called Gordian. He held the important post of *regionarius*. Rome was, for ecclesiastical purposes, divided at this time into seven regions, each presided over by a deacon, and, according to Hodgkin, each deacon had a lay assistant called a *regionarius*. Gordian was doubtless a layman. Gregory's mother was called Silvia.

From the family picture presented by Gregory to the Monastery of St. Andrew, which was placed in its *atrium* and was described by his biographer, John the Deacon, who had seen it,[2] we learn that Gordian was tall, with a long face, green eyes!!! (*virides oculi*)—let us hope the paint had gone wrong—with a short beard, thick hair, and grave countenance; while his wife Silvia is described as of

the builder of the Church of St. Cosmas and Damian, and he is followed by Dudden.

[1] "In the notes to the *Félire* of Aengus (ed. Stokes, p. 63), there seems an attempt to give Gregory an Irish pedigree" (Plummer, *Bede*, vol. ii. p. 68).

[2] *Op. cit.* iv. 83.

full height (*statura plena*), with round and fair face somewhat marked with crows' feet. She had blue eyes, small eyebrows, comely lips, and a jovial countenance (*vultu hilari*). In the picture she was dressed in white and held a psalter in her hand from which she was reading the 175th verse of the 119th Psalm, while with two fingers of her right hand she was making a cross.[1] On her husband's death Silvia retired from the world, and adopted a religious life at Cella Nova, near the Monastery of St. Saba.[2] Under the pavement of its church there are still remains of Silvia's oratory.[3] She became a saint and was commemorated on the 3rd of November.

Gordian had three sisters, Aemiliana, Tarsilla. and Gordiana, who dedicated themselves as virgins, continuing, however, to live in their own house, as was usual with noble ladies. The two former were noted for their austere life. One of them is said to have had callosities on her knees, and elbows like a camel, from continual kneeling, and Gregory tells us, that in consequence of her prayers and fastings she had visions : among others, she saw her ancestor Pope Felix, who invited her to go and join him in heaven. When she presently died, she is said to have appeared to her sister Aemiliana, and bidden her go to her. The latter also died young, a delicious fragrance surrounding her death-bed, and the two were inscribed among the saints.[4] The third sister,

[1] These precious pictures are gone and are now replaced by the "Martyrdom of St. Andrew," by Guido and Domenichino.

[2] See John the Deacon, *Vit.* i. 9. [3] Grisar, *op. cit.* i. 625.

[4] See *Mart. Rom.* 30th Jan. and 25th Feb.

Gordiana, is described by her nephew Gregory (who seems to have been greatly troubled and chagrined by the fact) as a frivolous and gay young lady, with no vocation for the life and austerities of a recluse. She adopted a solemn visage in the presence of her exacting sisters, but when their backs were turned she was full of sprightliness and loved the world, and eventually, when she was left alone, married her steward. All this we learn from Gregory's own writings.[1]

Gregory had also a maternal aunt called Pateria,[2] who was married in Campania, and from one of his letters to the Subdeacon Anthemius we learn that he sent him orders to give her forty gold pieces for "shoe-money" for her boys (*ad calciarium puerorum*) and four hundred measures of corn for her sustenance.[3] In one of his letters he speaks of his nurse Domna as still living. Ewald and Hartmann suggest that she was really called Dominica.[4]

We do not know the exact year of Gregory's birth, but it has been generally supposed it was about the year 540, some ten years after St. Benedict had founded his order.[5] He was named Gregory (*i.e.* the Watchful).[6] He is called a Roman by his biographers, but his mother was probably a Sicilian of fortune, since Gregory inherited large estates in the island, and a monastery he founded there is

[1] *Hom. in Ev.* ii. 38, 15; *Dial.* iv. 16.
[2] *E. and H.* vol. i. p. 50, note 2.
[3] *Ib.* i. 37. [4] *Ib.* iv. 44.
[5] See C. Wolfsgruber, *Greg. der Grosse*, i. note 3.
[6] Hence Bede call him *vigilantissimus juxta sua nomen.*

said to have been planted on his mother's property. His letters also show how assiduous he was about Sicilian affairs. He was, no doubt, educated as well and completely as a young Roman nobleman with a father both rich and serious would naturally be; but he tells us in his letters that he did not know Greek, nor did he write any work in that language, which had once formed a necessary equipment of a Roman gentleman, but was no longer spoken at Rome (*Nos nec Graece novimus nec aliquod opus aliquando Graece conscripsimus*).[1]

This is especially curious, since he actually lived six years at Constantinople, not as a private person, but as an ambassador, or nuncio, while, on the other hand, a great part of the theology then current was written in Greek. "Justinian was the last Emperor, who, either in public or private life, used the Latin tongue. . . . Procopius, who had travelled in Italy, knew no Latin, and in Gregory's time, at Constantinople, Greek was the language of the Court, of the Church, of the Law Courts, of the Bureaux, of the Hippodrome, and the streets."[2] This makes Gregory's confession astounding. On the other hand, the fact that he carried on such a large and confidential correspondence with people in high positions at Constantinople, always writing to them in Latin, shows that, like French in Germany in the eighteenth century, the old speech of Rome must have been generally familiar to the upper classes. He complains in several of his

[1] *E. and H.* xi. 55.

[2] Dudden, *op. cit.* i. 153.

letters of the incapacity of the interpreters,[1] and it may be that the correspondence on each side had to be interpreted. In a letter to Narses he bids him give his compliments to Dominica (his nurse). He had not answered her letter, he said, because, although her native tongue was Latin, she had written to him in Greek.[2]

Not only did Gregory not know Greek, but he does not show any taste for the humanities and the arts, and in his more austere later life he is found discountenancing what he calls *nugis et saecularibus litteris*.[3] His was eminently a practical and businesslike genius, which was developed by a lawyer's training. Gregory of Tours, his contemporary, tells us (perhaps hyperbolically) how, in the liberal arts of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic, he was deemed the first in Rome.[4] Paul the Deacon makes a similar statement,[5] but Gregory made no pretence to classical finish in his Latin style: thus, in a letter to his friend Bishop Leander, he tells him that he took little heed of the niceties of style (*situs modosque et praepositionum casus servare contemno*), for, as he says, "I deem it an indignity to tie up the words of the sacred oracle by the rules of Donatus."[6] As Mr. Dudden says, the Latinity of the *Dialogues* and *Morals*, though certainly not excellent, is yet, on the whole, respectable, and its grammatical simplicity contrasts favourably, not only with the barbarism of a Gregory of Tours, but also with the

[1] *E. and H.* i. 28, vii. 27, x. 14, 21.
[2] *Ib.* xi. 34.
[3] *Ib.* iii. 63.
[4] *Hist. Franc.* x. 1.
[5] *Vita*, ii.
[6] *E. and H.* v. 53*a*.

pedantry and polish of a Cassiodorus or a Columban.[1] Gregory's style was especially suited to letter-writing, of which he was one of the most notable masters. Like other high-born Romans he, no doubt, was well instructed in Roman law, but he apparently cared little for what we call philosophy, or for what was then known as science, which was far removed from that we know by the name. He does not mention astronomy or geometry in any of his works. On the other hand, John of Salisbury reports him as expelling the mathematici: "*Sanctus Gregorius . . . mathesin jussit ab aula recedere.*"[2] By this term he no doubt means the astrologers, whom he elsewhere denounces.[3]

His position, character, and knowledge of affairs pointed Gregory out for speedy promotion, and when still young he was nominated Urban Prætor, or more probably Præfect, of Rome[4] by the Emperor Justin the Second.[5] As Præfect, Gregory probably used the insignia of a Consul, and had a right to wear the purple-striped robe (*trabea*), and to ride in a four-horse chariot, while he largely superintended the government and administration of the city. At this time, however, the office was shorn of much of its old importance, and the greater part of the officials who used to do the bid-

[1] *Op. cit.* 73. [2] *Polycrat.* ii. 26; *Gregorovius I.* p. 418, note 27
[3] *Mor.* xxxiii. 19; *Hom. in Ev.* 10, par. 5.
[4] John the Deacon, i. 4.
[5] The only date we have referring to Gregory's holding this office is in one of his letters (*E. and H.* iv. 2, and note 2), where he says he signed the *cautio* given by Laurentius when he became Bishop of Milan, 22nd January 573, and says: "*Ego quoque tunc urbanam praefecturam gerens pariter subscripsi.*"

ding of its holder had disappeared. As Mr. Dudden says: "There was no longer work for curators of baths, or theatres, or statues, when the baths were waterless, the theatres deserted, and the statues fallen or broken; nor was there need of a Minister of Public Spectacles when the only surviving spectacles were the ceremonies of the Church. . . . The office was still, however, of some consideration; within the walls of Rome the civil administration rested in his hands, his jurisdiction over the citizens being almost unimpaired. In financial matters he was still the great authority. The Government officials of whom he had the superintendence were more in number perhaps than is usually supposed, since at a later date such officers as a Curator of the Aqueducts and a Palace Architect were still in existence."[1] Further, the Præfect acted with the Pope in buying and distributing grain, and co-operated with the *Magister Militum* in taking measures for the defence of the City.

The position was still a very arduous as well as dignified one, for during the previous five-and-twenty years Rome had been successively entered and plundered by Totila in 546, Belisarius in 547, again by Totila in 548, by Narses in 552, and lastly, in 568 by the Lombard Alboin, and it was, no doubt, in a terribly ruinous and impoverished condition.

On the death of his father, the date of which is not known, but was probably about 575 A.D., Gregory became possessed of great wealth, including large

[1] Dudden, i. 103; *E. and H.* ix. 106, and xii. 6.

estates in Italy and Sicily and much personal property. Like other serious men of his time, to whom the future of the world seemed dismal, he had been attracted by the peaceful austerities of a religious life, and especially by the example of St. Benedict. Gregory devoted his own patrimony in Sicily to the foundation and endowment of six monasteries in that island, which Hody calls "the special asylum and paradise of the Church." These monasteries were all in the diocese of Palermo, and still existed at the end of the eighth century. One of them was built on his mother's property (*in aedibus maternis*).

A more interesting foundation of St. Gregory was the Monastery of St. Andrew on the Caelian Hill, which he endowed with his ancestral residence and with an ample income, thus following the example of other great Roman nobles like Eucherius, Paulinus, Cassiodorus, etc. We shall have more to say of this monastery in a later volume. The balance of his fortune he left to the poor.[1]

By most writers it has been supposed that he became technically a monk, a view in which Mr. Dudden concurs. This seems to be improbable, for about this time he became one of the Seven Deacons who presided over the eleemosynary affairs of the Church at Rome, which office would be incompatible with the life of a monk, and involved a "secular" and not a "regular" vocation;[2] but he no doubt made the

[1] Greg. of Tours, *op. cit.* x. 1.

[2] I can nowhere find any statement in his writings definitely saying he had ever been a professed monk. His language only implies

monastery he had founded his most cherished home, whither he withdrew for peace and quietude. In a letter written to Marinianus, Bishop of Ravenna, Gregory urges that any one who had attained any ecclesiastical order should no longer have any power in a monastery or any longer dwell there.[1] Gregory of Tours tells us how, in the pursuit of his duties, he who had traversed the streets in bejewelled silken robes now did so in coarse garments, while he dedicated himself to the service of the altars.[2] It has been supposed that his mother's example led him to take this course, and a not improbable legend tells us that he was really persuaded to it by Simplicius and Constantine, the one abbot and the other a monk of Monte Cassino (who had sought refuge at Rome after the burning of their monastery by the Lombards), and by other monks who were his friends. At all events, it is clear that he not only gave up his wealth, but also his heart, to his new ideal of life, and he never flinched in his devotion to it. He remained an ascetic to the end of his days.

Like most people of wealth and position who turn their backs on the world, he pushed his asceticism to great lengths. *Inter alia*, he is said to have fed on raw vegetables (*crudo legumine*) and fruit supplied by his mother, who lived as a recluse close by, and which she sent to him, we are expressly

that he lived like a monk in his own Monastery of St. Andrew when he was at Rome. John the Deacon, not an accurate person, also uses ambiguous language; thus he says: "Primo sub Hilarionis, deinde sub Maximiani, venerabilium patrum, regimine, multis sibi sociatis fratribus, regulari tramite militavit" (*op. cit.* i. 6 and 7).

[1] *Epp. of St. Gregory*, viii. 16, note. [2] *Op. cit.* book x. i.

told, on a silver dish.[1] Various stories are told of the way in which he permanently injured his health by his privations and devotion to study. He frequently fainted and was racked by pain from gout, was not able to keep the prescribed fasts, and could barely keep that on Easter Eve, and he tells us he would have succumbed more than once if the brethren had not insisted on his taking proper food.

Presently (we do not know at what date) we find Gregory appointed, by Pope Benedict the First, one of the Seven Regionary Deacons of Rome. Baronius suggests they were the precursors of what are now known as Cardinal Deacons. They presided over the administration of alms and other similar duties in the seven ecclesiastical regions into which Rome was divided. Gregory of Tours speaks of him as "the seventh Levite," while Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria, makes him an archdeacon, meaning probably the head of the seven deacons, all of which is inconsistent with his having been an actual monk or regular. This appointment was, according to his own confession, very much against his inclination, for his heart was pining for the seclusion and austerities of a monastery, and to get away from the world. It was probably still more distasteful to him when the Pope presently promoted him to a more influential place, and made him the papal representative or nuncio at the Imperial Court of Constantinople, which was the most dignified post in his gift.

[1] John the Deacon tells us that Gregory one day, having no money at hand, gave this dish to a beggar dressed as a shipwrecked mariner, who afterwards turned out to have been an angel in disguise (*Vit.* i. 10).

This post Bede calls that of *apocrisiarius* (from ἀπόκρισις, "an answer." The word is glossed in Latin by *responsalis*).

It will be well to realise the political condition of the Mediterranean lands at this time. The Empire of Byzantium was still by far the most powerful state in Europe. During the reign of Justinian, 527–565, it had largely recovered in wealth and power after the terrible ravages of the Barbarians in the fifth and beginning of the sixth century. The African province had been reconquered from the Vandals by Belisarius, and now formed, with the valley of the Nile, a famous granary for the Empire. Italy had been similarly recovered from the Goths by Narses, and with the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, and the Istrian and Illyrian regions, became in the same reign once more part of the Roman Empire. The Tigris had been maintained by Justinian as the eastern limit of the Empire, as the Danube and the Alps remained its boundaries on its northern frontier, while the peoples of the Caucasus on the one hand and the Abyssinians on the other had been brought within the influence of the Roman power for the first time.

In the far West, Justinian's general, Liberius, reconquered a large part of the maritime district of Spain, including the cities of Corduba, Carthagena, Malaga, and Assidonia, with many places on the coast, from the Visigoths. Malaga, Assidonia, and Corduba were sixteen years later recovered from the Romans by the great Visigothic chief, Leovigild.

The rest of Spain, including the Suevian kingdom in the north, had by the year 616 definitely passed under the rule of the Visigoths, as the greater part of Gaul had passed under that of the Franks.

Having recovered Italy, Justinian on the 13th of August 554 issued a decree known as the Pragmatic Sanction, in which two clauses occur which helped to strengthen the authority of the Church there. In the nineteenth clause he associated the Pope with the decayed remnant of the Senate in supervising weights and measures and the standards of the coin in the great city, and in the twelfth he assigned to the bishops and chief persons of each province the appointment of the provincial governors.

The Empire, with its frontiers thus enlarged by Justinian, did not remain long intact. It is no part of my purpose to describe the attacks upon it of the Slavs and Saracens in the East, and we must limit our short survey to Italy. It was in the year 568 that the Lombards crossed the Alps from Pannonia under their king, Alboin, and speedily conquered Venetia and Cisalpine Gaul which, as Mr. Bury shrewdly says, were in ecclesiastical opposition to Justinian and the Roman See, and probably in some measure favoured Alboin's conquest. Alboin advanced as far as Tuscany and founded the Lombard kingdom of North Italy. Two of his nobles, named Zotto and Farwald, proceeded farther, and founded the more or less dependent duchies of Spoleto and Beneventum, the latter in 571. These three states during the succeeding half-century con-

siderably enlarged their borders at the expense of the Imperial possessions.

The peninsula was thus divided between two sets of masters, and in each case their possessions were again divided into three groups, each controlled by an important city.[1]

[1] Mr. Dudden and Dr. Bury have given a good condensed account of the division, which I shall follow. The principal Roman possessions were :—

"1. In the north, Istria, Grado, the Venetian Coast, maritime Liguria, and the towns of Padua, Mantua, Monselice, Cremona, Piacenza, Parma, Reggio, and Modena, which belonged to the Empire in 580. To these we must add the Exarchate of Ravenna and the maritime Pentapolis, *i.e.* the cities of Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, Sinigaglia, and Ancona, with the inland Decapolis, *i.e.* the cities of Jesi, Gubbio, Cagli, Luceoli, Fossombrone, Valvense, Urbino, Montefeltro, Umana, and Osimo, and also the Æmilia, comprising Ferrara, Bologna, Cesena, Imola, etc.

"2. In the centre, the Roman possessions included the city of Perugia and the later *Ducatus Romae*, a district which stretched from Todi and Civita Vecchia on the north to Gaeta on the south, including all the ancient province of Latium.

"3. The southern group comprising Naples with a small surrounding territory, including Amalfi, Sipontum, on the east coast, Paestum and Agropoli isolated on the west coast, the two provinces of Calabria and Bruttii, and the islands of Sardinia, Corsica, and Sicily.

"These several districts were all under the Emperor's lieutenant at Ravenna, known as the Exarch, a title which first appears in the time of Gregory.

"The Lombard territory also consisted, as I have said, of three states :—

"1. In the north it was directly subject to the Lombard kings, and included Milan and Pavia, the royal residences, and a number of small subordinate duchies, including those of Bergamo, Brescia, Friuli, Trient, etc., and Tuscany.

"2. In the centre was the Great Duchy of Spoleto, which continually endeavoured to extend its limits to the north at the expense of the Pentapolis, and to the west at the expense of Rome. It tended to join Tuscany and to include the isthmus of land which lay along the Flaminian road between Rome and the Adriatic, of which the key was Perugia.

"3. The Duchy of Beneventum including almost all the territory east of Naples and north of Consentia" (Dudden, i. 167 and 168 ; Bury, *Later Rom. Empire*, ii. 146, note 14, 148 and 149).

ITALY IN THE TIME OF ST. GREGORY.

To face p. 16.

Gregory's language about the Lombards seems to me somewhat extravagant and exaggerated. In their wars with the Empire they acted, no doubt, like other rough soldiers, and were ruthless, destroying property and holding their captives to ransom or selling them as slaves. The country people naturally suffered as they do in all wars, but it does not appear that they were the mere cruel despots he makes them out to be. Their Arianism was doubtless their gravest fault in his eyes, but since they were Arians they must have been also Christians, although not accepting the shibboleths of Athanasius. I was very glad to find Mr. Dudden taking this view, which I had come to independently, and thus confirming mine by his powerful authority. I will quote his words. He says: "We must beware lest we depict the miseries of the conquered in too lurid colours. As a matter of fact, the Lombards, at any rate after the establishment of the monarchy, appear to have treated the population with no extraordinary harshness. . . . Gregory's own letters furnish us with proof that the Lombard rule was less oppressive than he would fain make out. Thus we hear of Roman towns entering into negotiations with Lombard dukes with a view to becoming their subjects,[1] and again of frequent desertions to the enemy of Roman freemen, soldiers, and ecclesiastics.[2] In another letter the Pope complains that the landowners in Corsica were compelled to take refuge with the Lombards in order to escape the intolerable burden of Imperial taxation.[3] . . .

[1] *E. and H.* ii. 33. [2] *Ib.* x. 5. [3] *Ib.* v. 38.

Doubtless in the long-run it made little difference to the miserable provincial whether he was at the mercy of a Lombard chieftain or of the fiscal vampires of the Roman Empire." [1]

The great features which distinguished the Lombards in addition to their race, language, customs, and arts were, first, the fact that while the Romans were orthodox the Lombards were Arians; and secondly, as Dr. Bury says, "inasmuch as the Lombards were a race of warriors who despised agriculture, they at first left the old landowners on the ground, merely exacting a third of the produce as tribute, and where they took the land cultivated it by slaves, thus causing only a moderate change in the population."

The invasion and conquest of a large part of Italy by the Lombards took place in the reign of Justin the Second, the nephew and successor of Justinian. Justin and Pope Benedict the First both died in the same year, *i.e.* 578 A.D. The former was succeeded by Tiberius the Second, surnamed Constantine, a Thracian by origin, who had been Captain of the Guards, and the latter by Pelagius the Second, who appointed Gregory as Papal Nuncio at Constantinople. Gregory's chief political function at this time was no doubt to continually remind the Imperial authorities of the evils brought upon Italy by the rapacity and cruelty of the Lombards, with which the hapless and inefficient Exarch at Ravenna failed adequately to cope. The fact was that his master the Emperor could not spare him either the men

[1] Dudden, *op. cit.* i. 174.

or the money, for his hands were more than full with his struggles against the Persians and the merciless Avars. In 585 Pope Pelagius wrote Gregory a letter[1] addressed to his dear son "the venerable Deacon Gregory" (surely no monk), to inform him of what was going on in Italy, which letter he entrusted to Sebastian, Bishop of Ravenna, who was to tell him further of what was happening there. He bids him implore the Emperor to appoint a resident and local *Magister Militum* or a *Dux*, *i.e.* a commander of some weight, to protect the city from the Lombards, for the Exarch had written to say he could do nothing for him as he could not protect his own border. But the Emperor had his hands too full of his own troubles. The long-drawn-out Persian War and the continual assault of the Avars had to be met, and all he could do was to write to the Frankish king, Childebert, offering him a bribe of 50,000 gold pieces to invade Italy and punish the Lombards. Childebert took the money, crossed the Alps on four several occasions, and apparently did his best to help the Emperor, but with very small success. In this letter the Pope further bids Gregory send back to him one of the monks of his monastery, whom he had taken with him and whom he calls a priest, whose presence at the monastery was urgently needed (*quia et in monasterio tuo et in opus quod eum praeposuimus necessarius esse*).[2] This was probably Maximianus, one of the monks of St. Andrew's. It would seem that Hilarion, the Abbot of St. Andrew's,

[1] *E. and H.* vol. ii. App. II.

[2] *Ib.* ii. App. II. p. 441.

was dead, and the Pope wished to appoint Maximianus as abbot.

While at Constantinople, Gregory met and became a close friend of the Spanish bishop, Leander,[1] who, like himself, was a man of high birth. He was a contemporary of the Visigothic king, Leovigild, and had apparently gone to Constantinople to plead the cause of Hermenigild, the son of Leovigild, who had abandoned Arianism and rebelled against his father.

Like Gregory's, his health had suffered greatly from his austerities. He had become Bishop of Seville and Metropolitan of Spain in 579. Ten years later he presided at the famous Third Council of Toledo, when the Spanish Arians gave in their adhesion to the Catholic faith, having been converted to orthodoxy by the persuasion of Leander and his brethren. The letters which passed between the two aristocratic and accomplished ecclesiastics, Gregory and Leander, are delightful specimens of genuine sympathy and affection. Besides Leander, as we learn from his correspondence, Gregory made several influential friends at Constantinople, with whom he afterwards corresponded. Among others were Constantina the Empress, Theoctista, the Emperor's sister, who had charge of the Imperial children, Narses, Theodorus, physician to the Emperor, Gregoria, Lady of the Bedchamber to the Empress, the two patrician ladies Clementina and Rusticiana, the patrician Johannes, Philip, the commander of the Bodyguard, and Domitian, Bishop of Melitene and

[1] *Vide infra.*

Metropolitan of Lesser Armenia, a relative of the Emperor—that is to say, some of the noblest and most influential people at the Byzantine Court.

Gregory was, as we have seen, a great devotee and champion of the austere life and of the contemplative virtues of the cœnobites and monks. He tells us that in order that he might not be too much immersed in secular matters when at Constantinople, he took with him some monks, no doubt from his own Monastery of St. Andrew, including his friend Maximianus, who afterwards became its abbot. He hoped that their austere life might continually remind him of better things, and in the preface to his *Moralia* he speaks of the peace he found in their company when troubled by the turmoil of the outer world. These homely friends of his were, however, not allowed to stay too long, nor would it have been reasonable that they should, since the monastery could hardly get on without them. Gregory tells us, in his *Dialogues*,[1] how the ship in which they sailed was overtaken by a tempest in the Adriatic, during which the sails and masts were lost, and the water in the hold reached the deck. The sailors and passengers gave up hope of being saved, exchanged the kiss of peace, and received the Sacrament. The ship, nevertheless, escaped, and after eight days' peril reached Crotona, and then immediately sank.

Gregory's literary activity when at Constantinople was phenomenal. *Inter alia*, at the instance of his

[1] iii. 36; John the Deacon, i. 33.

friend Leander, he wrote a work on Job in thirty-five books, with mystical interpretations. This is the well-known *Magna Moralia*, with which his name is so closely connected. In sending a copy to Leander, to whom it was dedicated, he tells him that the work had been delivered in a series of homilies, and that he had afterwards put it in the form of a treatise which was being written out by scribes.[1]

The miseries and misfortunes of Job were a perpetual source of consolation and example to the ascetics, who looked on self-inflicted suffering and misery as the highest form of virtue. Its fine poetry and high ideals had previously attracted others: notably Origen, and we find Licinianus, Bishop of Carthagena in Spain, writing to Gregory about St. Hilary of Poictiers' translation of Origen's commentary on Job in six books. He remarks that he cannot understand how a man so learned and holy should have accepted Origen's tales about the stars. "I, most holy father," he says, "can in nowise be persuaded that the heavenly luminaries are rational spirits."[2]

While at Constantinople, Gregory also had a controversy with Eutychius, who was then Patriarch there, and who on the authority of 1 Cor. xv. 44 claimed that Christ's risen body was a spiritual and immaterial body only. To this Gregory replied by quoting Luke xxix. 39, where Christ tells the sceptical to handle him and see. A ghostly body, he urged, has neither flesh nor bones which can be

[1] *E. and H.* i. 41. [2] *Ib.* i. 41*a*.

touched or seen. Eutychius claimed, on the other hand, that such a body was cognisable by faith, and he especially quoted 1 Cor. xv. 6, 37, and 1 Cor. xiii. 50, which seem conclusive. The able and rhetorical Italian turned the flank of his opponent by the reply that what Paul meant was the substitution of a mundane by a glorified and yet a real material body. Whatever the value of the discussion, the Emperor gave his decision for Gregory, and the book which Eutychius had written was burnt. Eutychius on his sick-bed recanted and confessed his faith in the material resurrection of the body. Holding one hand on the other he said to those around him, "With this body we shall rise again."

The controversy had been so energetically pressed that both combatants became ill and took to their beds. Soon after, *i.e.* 582, Eutychius died, and was succeeded as Patriarch of Constantinople by John, called "the Faster," so called, according to Theophylactus, because he had "completely acquired a philosophic mastery over pleasure, a tyrannical authority over the passions, and had made himself a despot over his appetites."[1]

The Emperor Tiberius died in 582, and was succeeded by Maurice, who had married his daughter Constantina, and who, like himself, had been Captain of the Guards.

While Gregory lived at Constantinople he had ample time and opportunities for studying the erratic

[1] Theoph. *Hist.* vii. 6; Dudden, i. 144.

diplomacy of the Byzantine Court, and he seems to have ingratiated himself with the Emperor, for we are told by Gregory of Tours that he became the godfather of one of his sons, who was named Theodosius. In a letter written to Theoctista, the sister of the Emperor Maurice, in 601, Gregory recalls some of his troubles when at the capital. He writes of the polemical Greeks among whom he had lived: "There are many orthodox people who are inflamed with misguided zeal, and fancy they are fighting heretics while really they are creating heresies." Again, he tells us that when he was in residence at the Imperial City, many used to come to him who had been accused on certain points, and whom he had found innocent, and had kindly received and defended from their accusers. Among these charges, he adds, were that under pretence of entering into religion they were wont to dissolve marriages; that they held that baptism did not entirely take away sins; that if any one did penance for three years for his iniquities he might afterwards live perversely; and that if they said under compulsion that they anathematised anything for which they were blamed, they were not bound by the bond of anathema. On these charges Gregory goes on to comment that if there had been people holding such views they would not have been Christians, and would themselves have been anathematised by himself and all Catholic bishops, and by the Universal Church.[1]

Gregory's residence at Constantinople was, no

[1] *E. and H.* xi. 27; Barmby, *Epp. of Greg* xi. 45.

doubt, very tiresome to him, and it was perhaps at his own instance that the Pope recalled him and that he returned to Rome, where we find him again in the year 585 or 586. Baronius, quoting a Vatican MS., tells us that the Emperor had given him some relics which he took back with him for his monastery—*inter alia*, the arm of St. Andrew and the head of St. Luke.[1] The former, according to Butler, still remains in its old place, but the latter is now preserved at St. Peter's. St. Andrew's Monastery was at this time presided over by the Abbot Maximianus, who remained its head till the year 591, when he was appointed Bishop of Syracuse.

It would seem that on his arrival at Rome Gregory was appointed his secretary by the Pope, for Paul the Deacon, in his *History of the Lombards*,[2] tells us that, "while he was still deacon," Gregory wrote three notable letters addressed on behalf of Pope Pelagius to the Bishop of Istria on the famous schism of "The Three Chapters." These letters are dated by Ewald and Hartmann in 585 and 586 A.D.[3] The subject-matter had caused great heartburning at the time, and was in essence perhaps the most undisguised and Erastian interference by the lay authorities with the ecclesiastical functions of the clergy on record. In order to conciliate the Monophysites whom he wished to draw into the orthodox fold, Justinian, at the instance of a disingenuous ecclesiastic, Theodore Askidas, and of the Empress

[1] See Baronius, ad an. 586, 24.
[2] Vol. iii. 20.
[3] *Op. cit.* ii. App. III.

Theodora, had compelled the heads of the Church, including not only his own Patriarch at Constantinople, but also the Pope, to pronounce as heretical parts of the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon. In these decrees, the views of Theodore of Mopsuepsia, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Ibas of Edessa, which had been challenged as tainted with Nestorianism, but which that Council had refused to condemn, were virtually affirmed. Justinian had his way, but only after exercising the grossest cruelty and durance upon the bishops and other great ecclesiastics, who in the matter had represented the views of the greater part of the Orthodox Church. Notwithstanding the tremendous penalties of disobedience, a large number of the clergy in Africa, Illyricum, and Upper Italy, including the archbishops of Milan and Aquileia, refused to obey or to recognise the capacity of those who had tampered with the finding of the Council. The Latin Church (however unwillingly) was, however, compromised by the surrender of Pope Vigilius and subsequently by that of Pelagius, his successor, and the deletion of "The Three Chapters" was exacted as a test of orthodoxy by Gregory, who wrote a disingenuous but clever *Apologia* for the action taken by his predecessors in regard to this Council. In this *Apologia* Gregory, on behalf of Pope Pelagius and following Leo the First, made a sharp distinction between the decrees of the Council regarding dogma and doctrine and those relating to private and personal matters, maintaining that while the former were decisive the latter could be revised.

Pope Leo had urged that this was notably the case in regard to the decision of the Council on the status and position of the See of Constantinople, which he rejected. Gregory for similar reasons professed to reject the Council's decision in regard to the case of Theodoret and Ibas. He further argued that by its decision the Council had clearly not approved of all the writings of the three bishops, or it would have put itself in opposition to the Council of Ephesus; nor had all Theodoret's writings been otherwise condemned, but only those deemed to be tainted with Nestorianism.[1]

In regard to this famous question, the Latin bishops for the most part supported the Holy See. Justinian crushed the opposition in Illyricum by deposing the Bishop of Salona, who was Metropolitan of Dalmatia. Africa conformed in 559 A.D. and the diocese of Milan in 571, but that of Istria remained intractable. Its leader was then the Archbishop of Aquileia, to whom the letters written by Gregory in the name of Pope Pelagius, above mentioned, were addressed. The appeal was of no effect, and the schism really lived on till the year 700. When he became Pope, Gregory, supported by the Emperor, ordered the recalcitrant bishops of Istria to attend a synod at Rome, but they resisted the demand, summoned a synod of their own, and petitioned the Emperor to revoke his order, as they were only teaching what Pope Vigilius had taught them; and objecting to be tried by the Pope, who was a prejudiced person.

[1] *E. and H.* ii. 49, and App. III. letters i., ii., and iii.

They promised to satisfy Maurice of the purity of their faith. The Emperor complied, and commanded Gregory, in consideration of the troubled state of politics, not to molest the Istrian bishops, and the Pope at once obeyed. It is a curious fact that although she was so devoted to him in other matters, Gregory was never able to secure the adherence of his patroness and friend the Lombard queen, Theodelinda, to his view on the question of "The Three Chapters."

While acting as secretary to the Pope, Gregory apparently also devoted himself to giving lectures on various parts of the Old Testament. Thus, he expounded the Heptateuch, the Books of Kings, the Prophets, Proverbs, and Canticles. Notes of his lectures were taken down by a student called Claudius, which Gregory himself intended to correct, but was probably not able to do so. The notes of Claudius on Canticles are apparently extant, while the rest are lost.[1] Probably at this time Gregory also edited and published the work he had written on Job at Constantinople.

It is also to this period of Gregory's life, when he was acting as papal secretary, that has generally been assigned the doubtful story in which his name occurs so prominently, in connection with certain Anglian slaves from far-off Britain whom he is said to have seen at Rome, and which it will be more convenient to discuss later on.

[1] See Dudden, i. 191 and note 4.

CHAPTER II

We have now reached the critical stage in Gregory's life when he became Pope. According to the report of Gregory of Tours, who learnt it from his own envoy, a deacon then at Rome, the Tiber, in November 589, overflowed its banks and destroyed many ancient buildings and overwhelmed some of the Church's granaries on the banks of the river, causing the loss of many thousands of measures of corn. This was one of a series of inundations which, according to Paul the Deacon,[1] were followed by a pestilence known as the *lues inguinaria*, *i.e.* the Oriental plague which had been desolating Eastern Europe for fifty years. Among its victims was Pope Pelagius, who died on the 7th or 8th of February 590.[2] There was only one possible successor in such a crisis, and we are told that Gregory was elected to the vacancy with the universal approbation of clergy, *senate* (by which the magnates are meant, for the senate was now dead), and people, but very much in-

[1] *Vit.* x. 1.

[2] It has been said that there was an interval of several months before his successor was appointed, during which the Archpresbyter, Archdeacon, and the *Primicerius Notariorum* acted as vicegerents of the see; but Gregory of Tours distinctly says that on the death of Pelagius, as the Church of God could not remain without a head, all the people elected *the* deacon Gregory (*op. cit.* x. 1).

deed against his own inclination, and that he did his utmost to escape from the position. Gibbon indulges in some sneers at the motives of the Pope. "*Nolo episcopari*" was a plea which that cynical historian was very dubious about. On this occasion his generally shrewd sense was affected by his prejudices. It seems impossible for any one who reads Gregory's correspondence with his intimate friends, and the deprecatory rebukes with which he answers their congratulations, to doubt his sincerity in the matter. Be it remembered he had given up great rank and wealth, and everything which ambitious men deem valuable, to adopt a life where the hardest fare and the greatest privations were his portion. He was the strictest of the strict in the observance of the rigid rules he had imposed on himself. On every occasion when he was brought out of his retreat into a position of prominence, he spoke in the same tone to his friends as he did in the prefaces to his books. To Theoctista, the sister of the Emperor, he wrote how he had lost the profound joys of repose, and how that while he had been elevated in external things he had been sunk in spiritual ones. "I endeavoured," he says, "daily to withdraw from the world and from the flesh, to see the heavenly joys in the spirit . . . neither desiring nor having anything in this world, I felt myself above everything. But the storm of temptation has cast me suddenly among alarms and terrors, for though I fear nothing for myself, I fear much for those of whom I have the charge."[1] To the

[1] *E. and H.* i. 5.

Patrician Narses he writes: "I am so overcome with melancholy that I can scarcely speak; the darkness of grief assails the eyes of my soul. I see nothing that is not sad, and everything which is supposed to please me appears to me lamentable. For I cannot care to think from what a height of tranquillity I have fallen, and to what a height of embarrassment I have ascended"; and he speaks of having been set to plough the Lord's fold "like a buffalo"—*in agro dominico cum bubalis arares.*[1] To a certain Andrew, styled Illustrious, he writes: "When you hear of my promotion to the Episcopate, weep if you love me, for there are so many temporal occupations here that I find myself by this dignity almost separated from the love of God."[2] To the Patrician John, who also helped in his election, he wrote: "I complain of your love which has drawn me from the repose which you know I sought. God reward you with direct gifts for your good intentions, but I pray Him deliver me as He will please from so many perils." He says, further, that he had been appointed Bishop, not of the Romans, but of the Lombards.[3] To his very confidential friend, the Bishop Leander, he says: "I weep when I recall the peaceful shore which I have left, and sigh in perceiving afore, that which I cannot attain."[4] But it is in writing to the subdeacon, Peter,—his pupil and companion,—whom he could hardly hope to deceive, that he breaks out pathetically when he recalls his old life in the monastery, in which he could escape from earthly cares instead

[1] *E. and H.* i. 6. [2] *Ib.* i. 29. [3] *Ib.* i. 30. [4] *Ib.* i. 41.

of being soiled with the world's dust: "I meditate on all I have suffered and lost. When I think of my former life, I seem to look back towards the shore."

Those who are not convinced of the sincerity of these phrases do not understand the fervour and zest which at this time possessed the best of men in all stations, who despaired of the world and saw everything being shipwrecked, to shrink away into the cell of the anchorite and there find peace and solace. And what temptation was there for the most ambitious man at this time to desire to become Bishop of Rome. Plague and pestilence and famine were ravaging the land, which had been trampled over by hordes of barbarians until its wealth was stripped from it and its population decimated. The Lombards possessed its best portions, and were aggressive and hard. Mr. Dudden has collected from different passages in the *Dialogues* a graphic if exaggerated picture of the unsettled condition of the country during the domination of the Goths and the Lombards, who had devastated it so ruthlessly. They roamed about the villages in twos and threes, pillaging or murdering all who were not strong enough to resist them. The roads were especially unsafe, and the haunts of robbers. Children were kidnapped and carried off even in the midst of towns. Sometimes towns themselves, like Aquino and Populonia, were ravaged. Wealthy monasteries were attacked and the monks tortured or put to death. The Lombards on one occasion murdered forty peasants because they refused to

eat meats sacrificed to their gods; on another they slew four hundred people who would not adore the goat's head which, according to their custom, they sacrificed to the devil (*i.e.* to their god), dancing round it in circles and dedicating it with blasphemous songs.[1] These stories point to the fact that many of the Lombards were still unconverted pagans and were not all Arians. On one occasion they hung up two monks on one tree, and on another beheaded a deacon.[2] As we shall see presently, this account of the doings of the Lombards is somewhat highly coloured. The natural consequence of the destruction of the wealthy classes, and of the stoppage of the eleemosynary agencies they supported, was that the peninsula, as on former occasions, was filled with swarms of vagabonds and beggars, the counterparts of the sturdy beggars in Elizabeth's time in England.

Among Gregory's other troubles were the heretics who repudiated his jurisdiction in spiritual things. The Monophysite schism, which was a special grief to him, had still many adherents, and, as we shall see later on, the orthodoxy of the Franks was tempered with many drawbacks besides the rude, illiterate barbarism of their community. Everywhere were difficulties and there was none to help, for the Emperor seemed to care little what became of the Western lands, where his jurisdiction was no longer obeyed, and whence he now derived scant profit and great cares, while the race of great Italians seemed to be extinct. No wonder the

[1] *Dialogues*, iii. 27, 28. [2] Dudden, i. 344.

recluse, theologian, and far-seeing statesman dreaded taking the helm in such a sea, and that (to use his phrase) he heard the bell of shipwreck ringing, and despaired of what he called "the rotten old vessel of which God had given him the charge." No wonder he tried to escape from the load, and, as his actual contemporary and namesake, Gregory of Tours, tells us, he wrote to the Emperor to ask him to refuse to confirm his election.[1] Germanus, the Præfect of Rome, however, intercepted the letter and wrote on his own account to press upon Maurice the duty of giving the Church a strong head in these woeful times. The Emperor's confirmation having arrived, we are told in a suspicious legend that Gregory took to flight disguised, and wandered for three days in the woods. He was again followed and brought back, and eventually planted on the fateful seat at St. Peter's.[2]

Once there, he faced the position like a man, and, in fact, he seems to me the only man of his time who does stand upright, and who unflinchingly did his duty in the presence of desperate difficulties. It has generally been argued that Gregory, previous to being Pope, had been Abbot of St. Andrew's. This is quite unsupported by tangible evidence. There is no room for him among the abbots of the

[1] Since the time of Justinian the emperors had claimed the right of confirming the election to the more important sees, and notably to that of Rome.

[2] The date of Gregory's accession has been discussed recently by Bright (page 41, note 8) and Plummer (*Bede*, vol. ii. 36). It seems pretty certain that it, in fact, took place on the 3rd September 590, which was a Sunday.

monastery. Maximianus was, in fact, abbot while Gregory was at Constantinople, and was promoted thence to the See of Syracuse in 591. The date of Gregory's election to the papal chair was the 3rd of September 590. It seems pretty certain that (as we have seen) at the time of his elevation, Gregory was not even a professed monk, and that he was still a deacon. On his election he necessarily became priest and bishop. His public profession of faith at the tomb of St. Peter on the occasion of his becoming Pope is interesting, if it is genuine. It is quoted by John the Deacon, who is not always a safe guide, and it gives the clauses *Deum verum de deo vero* and *Filioque*, which first occur in the West in the pronouncement of the Synod of Toledo in 589. I hope to discuss the question in the Appendix. It runs thus :—

"I believe in one God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons, one Substance : the Father unbegotten, the Son unbegotten, but the Holy Spirit, neither begotten nor unbegotten, but co-eternal with and proceeding from the Father and the Son. I acknowledge the only begotten Son, consubstantial with the Father, and born of the Father without time ; Maker of all things visible and invisible, Light from (*ex*) Light, True God of True God, the Brightness of His glory, the Image of His Substance : Who remaining the Word before all ages, was made perfect Man at the end of the ages, and was conceived and born from (*ex*) the Holy Ghost, and of (*de*) the Virgin Mary, and took upon Him our

nature without sin: and He was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried, and on the third day He rose again from the dead, and on the fortieth day He ascended into heaven, and He sitteth at the right hand of the Father. From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead, and He shall set before all eyes all the secrets of every heart, and He shall give to the righteous the eternal rewards of the heavenly kingdom, but to the wicked the punishment of everlasting fire, and He shall renew the world by faith at the resurrection of the flesh. I acknowledge one Faith, one Baptism, one Apostolic and Universal Church in which alone sins can be forgiven in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." [1]

Gregory's appearance is described for us in some detail by his biographer John the Deacon, from a portrait of him at St. Andrew's, which was painted on a circle of stucco in an apse behind the monks' "cellarium," and which was extant when John wrote in the ninth century. He conjectures that it was painted in the Saint's lifetime from the inscription appended to it, and also from the fact that instead of a "corona," or nimbus, it had a *tabula* or square frame about the head denoting a living person.[2] His figure is described as of medium height and well-made. Gregory speaks of himself as *mei molem corporis*, suggesting that he was of full body. His beard was tawny and sparse. About his

[1] Joh. Diac. *Vit.* ii. 2; Dudden, i. 222. [2] *Op. cit.* iv. 84.

large, round crown he had dark hair, curled and hanging below the middle of the ears. On his forehead, which was broad and high, were two little curls turning towards the right. The pupils of the eyes were of a yellow-brown colour and small. The eyebrows arched, long, and thin, the lower eyelids full. The nose aquiline, with open nostrils, the cheeks were regular, the lips ruddy and full, the chin prominent. The complexion was swarthy and also highly coloured, which latter colour was enhanced in later life. The expression was gentle. His hands were well formed, with tapering fingers "well adapted for handling a pen." In the picture he was represented standing, dressed in a chestnut-coloured *planeta* (an upper garment formed of a circle with a hole in the middle, through which the head was passed, *i.e.* a chasuble). This was worn over a "dalmatic," or long tunic with sleeves. These garments were then used by laymen as well as the clergy, and Gregory's own father was represented as wearing them. The dalmatic long survived as a ceremonial garment used by state officials, and Gordian may have worn it as a *regionarius*. It still forms part of the Coronation robes in England and elsewhere. In the picture the Pope was distinguished from his father by wearing a *pallium*, or pall, which probably marked his ecclesiastical position as a metropolitan. He was also represented as holding a book of the Gospels in his right hand, and making a cross with the other.

John the Deacon elsewhere describes one of

Gregory's *pallia* which still existed in his time. It differed from other palls in having no ornaments, being merely a narrow strip of white linen unembroidered.[1] We shall have more to say of palls and their meaning presently.

John the Deacon[2] also speaks of the modest phylacta "hung from his neck by a piece of poor cloth, and of his narrow belt, only a thumb in width." The phylactæ were really charms written on small pieces of parchment, or relics, in either case enclosed in small boxes of thin silver. In one instance Gregory tells us he sent to Theodelinda, the Lombard queen, a "filacta" (*sic*) containing a fragment of the true cross, and a lection from the Gospel, enclosed in a cross and wrapped in a Persian case (*theca Persica*).[3] Gregory's homely dress was matched by the ascetic standards of his living, and the only indulgence we read of in regard to his food was the Alexandrian wine he calls *cognidium*, which was flavoured with resin. Thus, in answering a letter of the Patriarch of Alexandria, who had apparently offered to send him some drinks called *collatum* and *viritheum*, he replied that he did not drink these beverages with pleasure, but he ventured to ask for some *cognidium*, which Eulogius had again, after a long interval, caused to be known

[1] John further describes how the pall was then worn. He says: "A dextro videlicit humero sub pectore super stomachum circulatim deducto; deinde sursum per sinistrum humerum post tergum deposito, cujus pars altera super eundem humerum veniens propria rectitudine, non per medium corporis, sed ex latere pendet." This shows that the front lappet in the picture hung by the left side and not in front, as is now usual (*Vit.* ch. 80; Dudden, i. 435).

[2] *Vit.* iv. 80.

[3] *E. and H.* xiv. 12.

in the City ; but at Rome they got the name but not the thing itself from the merchants.[1] It is pleasant to find the Pope with one human foible at least.

Directly he became Pope, Gregory instituted a great change in the papal household, substituting clerics, and principally monks, for lay attendants. The officials who looked after "the patrimony" were also similarly changed. In the latter case, not so prudently, for clerics are generally poor business men, and the later history of the Papacy is marked by the evils attending clerical control of lay affairs. In the wide papal lands, "nothing," says Dudden, "was left for laymen but the profession of arms and the occupation of agriculture."

Gregory surrounded himself with what, in his view, were the most learned men, who (with him) meant theologians : he found most of them among the members of his monastic family at St. Andrew's.[2]

Let us now try and realise the extent and kind of authority Gregory inherited as Pope. Nominally he was one of five patriarchs, among whom the superintendence and government of the Christian world was distributed, namely, the heads of the

[1] *E. and H.* vii. 37.

[2] Among his intimates were the Sub-deacon Peter, of whom we shall hear more presently ; Aemilianus the Notary, who took shorthand notes of his sermons ; Paterius the Notary, who edited excerpts from his writings ; John the Defensor, afterwards sent into Spain ; Maximianus, Abbot of St. Andrew's and afterwards Bishop of Syracuse ; Marinianus, a monk of the same monastery, afterwards Archbishop of Ravenna ; St. Augustine, prior of that abbey, afterwards the evangelist of Britain, and his companion Mellitus ; Probus, who was sent to build a xenodochium, or shelter, for strangers at Jerusalem and Claudius, afterwards Abbot of Classis, who had taken notes of Gregory's lectures on the Old Testament (Dudden, i. 245).

ancient patriarchates of Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, and the more modern and as yet not rigidly recognised patriarchate of Constantinople. While these five patriarchs all claimed co-ordinate jurisdiction and had their own provinces, the Roman pontiff had gradually acquired a precedence and seniority, which was generally conceded even at Constantinople. This was due to many causes, the most potent being the fact that he was Bishop of the Metropolitan See, that of the most famous city in the Empire—Rome. This was probably enhanced by the fact that the Courts of Ultimate Appeal, where the most learned lawyers and jurists were to be found, had been there. When the emperors moved their residence first to Ravenna and then to Constantinople, the Pope became the greatest and most influential figure in Rome itself, in addition to which the great wealth of the popes made them more potent personages than other patriarchs. All this was further enhanced by the legends which had grown up about Rome having been the see of the Senior Apostle, St. Peter, to whom the keys were alleged to have been specially entrusted. Gregory was hard pressed by the claims, to which I shall revert presently, set up by the Patriarch of Constantinople to the style of *episcopus universalis*, or sole bishop, which he adopted. While rejecting that proud style for himself, he did not fail to claim for the See of Rome *the primacy* over all churches (*sede apostolica, quae omnium ecclesiarum caput est*),[1] while he declared in

[1] *E. and H.* xiii. 50.

another letter[1] that he had been called to govern "the Church" (*indignus ego ad ecclesiae regimen adductus*). He quotes approvingly the action of his predecessor, Pelagius, in annulling by a fully valid censure certain of the proceedings of the Council of Constantinople (*Pelagius . . . omnia gesta ejusdem Synodi praeter illa*, etc., . . . *valida omnino districtione cassavit*),[2] thus claiming the power to pass over even the finding of a Council. He further adds that without the authority and consent of the Holy See nothing that might be passed (at such a synod) would be valid (*sine apostolicae sedis auctoritate atque consensu nullas, quaeque acta fuerint, vires habeant*).[3] Especially did he claim to supervise and overrule the decisions of his brother-patriarch at Constantinople when he deemed them uncanonical.[4] Occasionally this last claim was set out in undisguised terms. Thus he says in a letter to John, Bishop of Syracuse, "As to what they affirm of the Church of Constantinople, who can doubt that it is subject to the Apostolic See?" (*Nam de Constantinopolitana ecclesia quod dicunt, quis eam dubitet sedi apostolicae esse subjectam?*)[5] In another letter to the same bishop[6] he claims authority over all bishops when they have committed a fault (*nam quod se sedi apostolicae dicit subici, si qua culpa in episcopis invenitur, nescio quis ei episcopus subjectus non sit*).

On the other hand, he carefully guarded himself against being thought to have encroached upon the

[1] *E. and H.* v. 44. [2] *Ib.* ix. 156. [3] *Ib.*
[4] *Ib.* iii. 52. [5] *Ib.* ix. 26. [6] *Ib.* ix. 27.

legitimate rights of other patriarchs. Thus in a letter he wrote to Eulogius the Patriarch of Alexandria, which was written in reply to one he had received from the latter, and which was addressed to himself as Universal Pope, he styles this an arrogant title (*superba appellatio*), and he begs him to do this no more, for by giving to another what is excessive he was subtracting from himself; ". . . for if your Holiness calls me Universal Pope, you deny that you are yourself what you call me, namely, Universal" (*si enim universalem me papam vestra sanctitas dicit, negat se hoc esse, quod me fatetur universum*). He further protests against his phrase "as you have commanded" (*sicut jussistis*), and says, "I know who I am and who you are, for in position you are my brother, in character my father."[1]

Again, he writes to the Bishop of Syracuse to tell him that the Byzantine Primate (Crementius) had been charged with some fault by his fellow-bishops, and the Emperor wished him to be judged by Gregory according to canonical ordinance, but the Pope says he had been unwilling to decide the case. Crementius, it seems, had said that he was subject to the Apostolic See, whereupon Gregory remarked, "If any fault be found in bishops, I know not what bishop is not subject to it. But when there is no fault, all, according to the principle of humility, are equal" (*omnes secundum rationem humilitatis aequales sunt*).[2] The question in this particular case was not tried out, however, and three years later, in another

[1] *E. and H.* viii. 29. [2] *Ib.* ix. 27; Barmby, ix. 59.

letter, Gregory, who probably felt the position was a strained one, stated that he had not been able to investigate it, his hands having been so full, and he counselled the bishops of the province themselves to investigate the charges against their Primate.[1]

In only one of the letters in his long-extended correspondence do we find a phrase in which he seems to hint at a claim, in certain cases, of a patriarch to qualify the absolute *jurisdiction* of another patriarch. It is contained in a letter to Natalis, Bishop of Salona, in Dalmatia, who had wrongly removed the Archdeacon Honoratus, in spite of the protests of himself and his predecessor, adding that if any one of the four patriarchs had committed such great contumacy it would not have been tolerated (*Quod si quislibet ex quattuor patriarchis fecisset, sine gravissimo scandalo tanta contumacia transire nullo modo potuisset*).[2]

The initial sentence of this letter is a good example of Gregory's humour. It seems that Natalis had been rebuked by him for much feasting, and had replied by quoting Abraham's entertainment of the three angels as an example of such hospitality ; upon which Gregory replied, "We will not blame your fraternity if we come to know that you have entertained angels."

I have enlarged somewhat on the extent of the Pope's patriarchal jurisdiction at this time in order to emphasise the fact that the primacy of Rome as the

[1] *E. and H.* xii. 12 ; Barmby, xii. 32.
[2] *E. and H.* ii. 50 ; Barmby, ii. 52.

first See of Christendom was then almost universally acknowledged. This involved little, however, of that centralised authority which it acquired in later centuries. And especially was the theory resented by Gregory that the Pope was in any sense the universal or sole bishop, *Episcopus Unicus*, as he termed it, in whom the whole episcopate was in later times deemed to be merged, each bishop being thus reduced in effect to a papal vicar. Gregory, as Dr. Barmby says, seems to have regarded the See of St. Peter as everywhere supreme, only in the sense of its being its prerogative to conserve inviolate the Catholic faith and observance of the canons, wherever heresy or uncanonical proceedings called for protest and correction.[1]

The nominal patriarchate of the Roman pontiff was largely conterminous with the Latin-speaking races, and included North Africa, Italy, with its islands, Istria, Gaul, Spain, and Britain. In reality this description must be greatly qualified. A great part of Italy was in the hands of the Lombards, who were Arians. The larger part of Spain, namely, that subject to the Visigoths, had only quite recently discarded its Arianism; but it would appear that this had not been accompanied with any submission to the Holy See. Lastly, Great Britain was largely pagan, and where not pagan had ceased to have intercourse with Rome.

Apart from this, even in those parts where the orthodoxy of the Church was assured, the recognition of the patriarchal authority of Rome was not too

[1] *Op. cit.* Proleg. xii.

cordial, and the question of his authority had to be treated with considerable diplomacy by the Pope. This was notably the case in Africa, where the traditions of St. Augustine had survived. The Donatists also still maintained themselves there, especially in Numidia, under their own bishops. They were inoffensive and harmless in their behaviour, and were looked upon with a friendly eye by the authorities, and notably by the African Exarch. The Catholic bishops were also on good terms with them. As Mr. Dudden amusingly says: "Peace, toleration, and a lump sum now and then appear to have been their programme. The dangers of the Schism they entirely ignored."[1] Gregory's rhetoric had little effect on them. It must be remembered that the Donatists were not heretics in doctrine. They were really Schismatics. They had merely refused to obey Caecilian, Bishop of Carthage, because he had been ordained by a bishop who had lapsed during the Diocletian persecution and was deemed a traitor and incapable of transmitting the succession. They therefore set up a rival bishop to Caecilian, and started a new succession of their own. Gregory insisted, however, that no one who had been a Donatist should hold the office of a Primate, and he appointed a vigorous Numidian bishop named Columbus, who was devoted to himself, as his vicar-general, and more than one local synod was called to try and repress this as well as other scandals. The Emperor, too, offered his help and gave his countenance to the Pope's reform. The remedy

[1] *Op. cit.* i. 417

was only very partial, and things went on pretty much as before until the Arabs half a century later swept orthodox and schismatic away together. Meanwhile the orthodox African bishops and clergy continued to act very independently, and the Pope's patriarchal jurisdiction was largely nominal. He had a good friend, however, in the African Exarch.

This was the case also in the diocese of Milan, the great See of St. Ambrose, whose archbishop on the Lombard invasion had been obliged to seek shelter at Genoa in the Ligurian district, which still obeyed the Emperor. There were a good many adherents of the schism of "The Three Chapters" there, and a good deal of difficulty in the Pope maintaining his authority as the arbiter in disputes between rival bishops and among an independent clergy. He did so largely, there as elsewhere, by contenting himself with retaining the right of approving the appointment of Metropolitans, and then leaving them and their synods (to whom the internal discipline was almost entirely entrusted) with very little interference. The Pope's confirmation of such an appointment was generally marked by his presenting the Metropolitan with a pallium, or omophorion. In the East this vestment was used as of right by all bishops; in the West it was similarly worn as of right by three only, the Bishop of Rome, the Bishop of Ostia (as the usual consecrator of the Pope), and probably the Bishop of Ravenna. Others wore it by the special gift and consent of the Pope. Gregory, we know, gave it to the bishops of Syracuse, Messina, Palermo, Milan, Salona,

Nicopolis, Corinth, Prima Justiniana, Arles, Autun, Seville, and Canterbury. At Arles, Canterbury, and Syracuse it carried the jurisdiction of a papal vicar. In other cases it was a mark of honour and dignity. In some instances, when Gregory wished to confer a special favour, the pallium was conferred on bishops who were not metropolitans, as in the cases of the bishops of Syracuse, Messina, and Palermo (all in Sicily, where the Pope had such large possessions), and of Autun in Gaul. In the case of Autun, as we shall see, the bishop's metropolitan never secured the pallium. "The vestment seems to have been originally an Imperial gift, and in the sixth century the popes usually asked the Emperor's permission before bestowing it on bishops who were not subjects of the Emperor. It was forbidden to make any payment for it. As late as the seventh century the Emperor even claimed to confer it directly without the mediation of the Pope. It was only conferred on a bishop on personal application, and was worn during the first part of the Mass up to the reading of the Gospel, except in the cases of the bishops of Rome and Ravenna, who kept it on during the whole service, and only laid it aside when they returned to the sacristy after the celebration."[1]

In addition to being Pope and Patriarch of the West, the Roman bishop was also a metropolitan or archbishop. He held metropolitan authority over his seven suffragans: the bishops of Ostia, Portus, Silva Candida, Sabina, Praeneste, Tusculum, and Albanum.

[1] Dudden, i. 436.

For a long time, as Rufinus (writing at the end of the fourth century) says, the popes had also exercised a patriarchal and metropolitan jurisdiction over the suburban provinces under the jurisdiction of the so-called *Vicarius urbis*. These included the provinces of Picenum Suburbicarium, Campania, Tuscia, Umbria, Apulia, Calabria, Bruttii, Lucania, Valeria, Sicily, Corsica, and the lesser islands.[1] Sardinia, while it acknowledged the Pope's authority as Patriarch, had a metropolitan of its own, with a seat at Cagliari. Gregory calls him Metropolitanus.[2] Beyond these limits his jurisdiction as "Metropolitan," while acknowledged, was not well defined. The Aemilian and Flaminian districts, with Picenum Annonicarium, obeyed the Metropolitan of Ravenna; Liguria, the Cottian Alps, and Upper and Lower Rhætia, the Archbishop of Milan; Venetia and Istria, the Archbishop of Aquileia.[3]

At this time a large part of the Pope's metropolitan lands were dominated by the Lombards, who were Arians, and they appointed their own bishops and priests, who did not acknowledge him.

As Metropolitan, Gregory exercised a close supervision over the conduct and character of his suffragan bishops, and was especially vigilant in regard to their appointment. When a vacancy occurred in his metropolitan district, which was the model for others, he was at once informed, and thereupon he sent a Visitor, generally a neighbouring bishop, to administer the see until the appointment of a successor. The vacancy

[1] Dudden, i. 357. [2] *E. and H.* ix. 202. [3] Dudden, *ib.*

was not to last more than three months. The clergy, nobles, and people were then summoned for the election of a new bishop. They were assisted by the Visitor, and sometimes by the chief magistrate or military governor of the district. There was generally a scrutiny of votes, but sometimes the election was by acclamation and sometimes by delegates appointed for the purpose by the electors. The election had to be confirmed by the Metropolitan, who also had the power of veto; but the latter was not arbitrarily to set aside the electors in order to thrust his own nominee upon the see. If the electors were culpably neglectful in their duty, or no candidates were forthcoming, the Pope himself selected the candidate he deemed best suited. Gregory forbade the selection of strangers unless there was no eligible priest in the diocese, nor would he allow a layman to be elected, although monks and those in minor orders might be so, and he insisted that a bishop should have at least the necessary culture to know the Psalter.[1] In all such appointments in his own province Gregory reserved the power of veto to himself, nor did he recognise a bishop whose appointment he had not confirmed; and in the case of bishops who misbehaved, he claimed the right to have them tried at Rome and to deal with them there, nor would he admit that they had any right of appeal to the Emperor. On the other hand, he carefully guarded the episcopal authority against encroachment even from his own officials. Thus in a

[1] Dudden, i. 375.

letter written to one of them named Romanus, who held the office of *defensor*, or guardian, of Sicily, and who in certain suits in which clerics were engaged had displaced the jurisdiction of the Bishop, he says: "If each single bishop has not his own jurisdiction reserved to him, ecclesiastical order is confounded through you by whom it ought to be guarded."[1]

A few instances of specific cases in which Gregory gave advice to, or dealt judicially with, bishops, as their Metropolitan, may be given with profit. In a letter to John, Bishop of Squillacium, he bids him never make unlawful ordinations or allow any bigamist, or one who had taken a wife who was not a virgin, or one ignorant of letters, or maimed in any part of his body, or a penitent, or liable to any condition of service, to attain to sacred orders. Africans generally, and unknown strangers applying for orders, he was on no account to accept, since some Africans were Manichæans, while others had been rebaptized. Many strangers, again, though being in minor orders, had pretended to a higher dignity, and he must therefore be vigilant.[2]

In another letter written to John of Ravenna he

[1] *E. and H.* xi. 24; Barmby, xi. 37.

[2] *E. and H.* ii. 37; Barmby, ii. 37. Bishop John here named had been driven away from the See of Lissus (? Alessio), and Gregory had given him temporary charge of Squillacium (which was then vacant) until he could return to his own see. In this letter he uses a curious phrase (v. 12), *cardinalis sacerdos*. The words *cardinalis sacerdos* and *cardinalis pontifex* are also used in *E. and H.* i. 77, *cardinalis episcopus* in ii. 12, 37, and iii. 13, while in iii. 24 we read *cardinalem et proprium sacerdotem*. *E. and H.* quote several instances where *cardinalis* is used in the sense of *proprius*, *i.e.* regular, and meaning regularly appointed. *Cardinatus* is also used as a synonym for *ordinatus* or *institutus*; see *E. and H.* vol. i. p. 97, note 3.

entirely disapproves of reordinations: "for as one who has been once baptized ought not to be baptized again, so one who has been consecrated should not be consecrated again to the same order."[1]

In a letter to Bishop Columbus, Gregory denounces the custom which had arisen of allowing the Donatists to have their own bishops. The Donatists were, he says, largely increasing, and were in the habit of rebaptizing.[2]

In a letter written to John, Bishop of Prima Justiniana, he condemns him to be deprived of the sacred communion for thirty days, for having, contrary to the custom of the priesthood and communal discipline, given up an alleged deposed subdeacon to the prætor of the province, who had tormented him with stripes to make him confess.[3]

While Gregory kept a vigilant eye upon the bishops in the district over which he was Metropolitan, he left the discipline and government of the clergy largely in their hands, interfering only in bad cases, and he encouraged the meeting of local synods twice a year—before Lent and in the autumn—in each diocese to safeguard true doctrine, to make up quarrels, etc. He himself held periodical synods of his own bishops, who met on St. Peter's Day every five years. Strict rules were drawn up in regard to candidates for holy orders. "No one was to be ordained who had been guilty of immorality, bigamy, marriage with a widow or a divorced

[1] *E. and H.* ii. 45; Barmby, ii. 46.
[2] *E. and H.* ii. 46; Barmby, ii. 48.
[3] *E. and H.* iii. 2; Barmby, iii. 6.

woman, who had for several years led an evil life, or was liable to civil or military service, who had committed self-mutilation, was ignorant of letters, had done public penance, or taken usury, or been guilty of attempted simony or the invocation of secular influence,"[1] or was the member of a *curia*.[2] It had been deemed unlawful since the time of Pope Siricius for bishops, priests, and deacons of the Roman Church to marry after ordination, but married men had not in early times been excluded from the priesthood. The same pope had forbidden cohabitation in these cases. The rule was, however, very widely evaded, except in Italy, where married bishops, priests, and deacons mostly obeyed the injunction. With the increasing austerity of the Church the rule was extended so as also to include subdeacons; and to prevent scandal, by a special order issued in February 599, no bishop was permitted to have women living in his house except such as were allowed by the canons, namely, a mother, sister, aunt, or others of whom there could be no suspicion.[3] The general superintendence of the finances of each diocese was the duty of the archdeacon, who was personally responsible for all losses to the churches' treasury. He was assisted by an *Oeconomus*, or church steward, who had to see to the building and repair of churches, the cultivation of church lands, the payment of the stipends of the clergy, the distribution of alms, the conduct of lawsuits, and the care of the revenues during a vacancy.

[1] Dudden, i. 367, 375. [2] *Vide infra.* [3] Dudden, i. 388.

While Gregory insisted on the canonical rule that the revenues of the Church should be divided into four portions, one of which was for the bishop and a second one for the clergy, he generally allowed the bishops discretion as to how they apportioned the latter. It is curious to read how in certain cases the clergy, by a kind of Trades Union, exercised pressure on their bishop and exacted from him an agreement or charter of rights, afterwards confirmed by the Pope, for securing fair treatment. Thus in one case at Palermo the bishop engaged to give them their full fourth and to distribute it among them, not by favour, but according to the merits, the official standing, or the good work of each; their share was not only to be a fourth of the regular revenues of the Church, but also of the offerings of the faithful, whether in money or in kind. The bishop further undertook to have his accounts published annually, to allow clerics to buy wine from the church estate at market price, to reclaim all possessions of the church which were wrongfully retained by strangers, and to be slow in believing evil of his clergy and in punishing them.[1]

Bishops could not alienate the revenues of their churches without the consent of the Pope and their own clergy, and such consent was seldom granted.

[1] In a letter from Gregory to Paschasius, Bishop of Naples, Gregory suggests what he thought an equitable division of the Church fund among the clergy and poor there, namely, 100 solidi to the clerics of the Church; half a solidus each to 126 *praejacentes*, *i.e.* the senior clergy; 50 solidi to the foreign clergy; 150 solidi to poor men ashamed to beg; and 30 solidi to public beggars (*E. and H.* xi. 22; xiii. 46).

In one instance Fortunatus, the Bishop of Fano, was allowed to sell his church plate to pay a church debt; but the payment had to be made before the Roman agent, John the Defensor.[1] The property of intestate bishops, or property acquired after any one became a bishop, went to the Church. A bishop could only bequeath what he acquired before he became bishop, or what he had inherited from relatives.

For the guidance and instruction of bishops, Gregory drew up a famous manual, which presents his ideal of a pastor's life, known as his "Pastoral Care." The Emperor Maurice caused it to be translated into Greek in order that it might be circulated throughout the East. Augustine took it with him to England. King Alfred, with the help of Archbishop Plegmund and some Mass priests, paraphrased it in the West Saxon dialect. In 796 Alcuin wrote to the Archbishop of York about it, bidding him take the book with him wheresoever he went, and to read and reread it as a mirror of the pontifical life. In a series of councils held by Charlemagne in 813 at Mayence, Rheims, Tours, and Chalons-sur-Saône, its study was enjoined on the bishops, and Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, tells us some years later how the book, together with the canons of the Church, were put in the hands of all bishops at their consecration.[2]

The general scheme of the work is homiletic. Mr. Dudden condenses the ideals which the Pope set before men in his manual as the highest standards

[1] *E. and H.* vii. 13. [2] Dudden, i. 239.

of conduct. In it "he regards a bishop pre-eminently as a physician of souls. His principal functions are preaching and the exercise of discipline. In order to carry out his duties effectively he is bound to study with anxious care every form of spiritual disease; and he must have the skill to devise all remedies to suit all cases. He must act towards his people as a kindly father, but, if need be, as a severe governor. For the souls of the people were committed to his charge; he was their ruler; and for their salvation he would be held responsible. The episcopal dignity, in short, is an office of government to be administered by one who is skilled in the treatment of souls, for the benefit of the governed. And the principal instrument by which the work is carried on is that of preaching."[1]

Although Gregory made so many regulations and introduced so many reforms, he was not prodigal in his own synodical enactments. On the 5th July 595 he summoned a synod attended by twenty-three bishops from his metropolitan province, and thirty-five priests of titular churches, who all signed its acts; the remaining priests and the deacons were present, but took no part in it. The acts of this synod comprise six chapters.

No. 1 forbids deacons, whose proper duty it was to preach and minister to the poor, to act as chanters at Mass, with the exception of chanting the Gospel—*solumque evangelicae lectionis officium inter missarum sollemnia exsolvant*; the Psalms and other

[1] Dudden, i. 238.

lections were to be chanted by subdeacons or those in minor orders.[1]

No. 2. Only monks or men in orders were in future to attend upon the Pope in his bedchamber, and not laymen.

No. 3. The Rectors of "the Patrimony" were not to make or press claims to properties without ample proof of a good title. Nor to attach *tituli* or notices of ownership to properties supposed to belong to the Church[2] but with doubtful titles.

No. 4. Hitherto the bodies of popes when taken to their tombs had been dressed in dalmatics (a robe specially used at Rome, and only by special, privileged persons). These the people had afterwards torn into shreds, keeping them as sacred relics. Gregory deprecated the custom, affirming that such reverence should be reserved for the coverings of apostles and martyrs, and not be extended to those of sinful men. He therefore ordered that in future the bier at a pope's funeral was to have no covering

[1] Duchesne says that until St. Gregory's time it had been customary for the *gradual* and its additions to be sung like the Gospel by deacons only, and he quotes several epitaphs of deacons and archdeacons in which their fine voices were praised. Thus the possession of a fine voice and a thorough knowledge of music had been a necessary qualification for a deacon. This had interfered with their other duties. Hence the prohibition above enacted. The gradual was so called because it was sung at the *gradus* or ambo, where the lections were also read. It was always sung by a single cantor, the choir only taking up the final musical phrase. The gradual and similar chants were sung between the lections in the Mass (Duchesne, 168–9).

[2] These *tituli*, according to Ewald, were wooden or stone tablets placed at the boundaries of properties, and contained the names of the owners (see *E. and H.*, vol. i. p. 54, note 2).

(*quo Romani pontificis corpus ad sepeliendum duciter, nullo tegmine veletur*).

No. 5. This decree forbade the lesser officials to exact fees at ordinations, at the gift of the pallium, or for preparing the necessary documents. While such fees could not be demanded, presents if freely offered might be accepted.[1]

No. 6. Slaves of the church who wished to become monks were to pass through a period of probation, during which they were to retain the dress of laymen. If their conduct during such period was approved, they were to be emancipated.[2]

Gregory was stringent in exacting regularity of order and ritual, especially when any change meant increased authority or prestige. Thus he says that no Metropolitan had been wont to wear the pallium except at Mass, and he rebukes John, the Bishop of Ravenna, for using it while receiving the laity before celebration, and in solemn processions through the streets. He further charges the clergy at Ravenna with having used *mappulae*, or white linen covers, over the saddles of their horses when they went in processions, which was a further usurped dignity. Their use was strictly limited to the clergy of Rome, where even the lesser clerks before entering sacred Orders enjoyed the right.[3]

[1] It may be noted that by the Imperial law a new pope might give the bishops and clergy a present of not more than 20 lb. of gold, a bishop 100 solidi for the costs of enthronement, and 300 solidi to the notaries and officers of the consecrator, while clerks might give the bishops who consecrated them not more than a year's value of the benefice (see Dudden, i. 263, note).

[2] *E. and H.* v. 57*a*.

[3] Duchesne, 396–7.

It would seem that the bishop had presumed to do this because Ravenna was the seat of the Exarch and was once an Imperial residence.[1] In a letter written to John, Bishop of Syracuse, he tells him that he had heard that the deacons of the church at Catania had usurped the special privilege possessed by those of Messina alone in all Sicily, of wearing a certain kind of slippers, called *campagi*, covering only the heel and toes, which had been otherwise reserved for the higher clergy of Rome and Ravenna. The Pope strictly forbade this irregularity.[2]

Among the subjects discussed by St. Gregory in his letters, there is a ritual question which is of wider interest than the immediate issue. Preliminary to baptizing a person, the priest who performed the ceremony anointed with simple oil the breast and other parts of the body of the person baptized. This was the custom both in the East and West.

After baptism it was the custom in the East for the same priest to anoint the forehead of the baptized person with chrism (a mixture of oil and balsam) which had been consecrated by a bishop. In the West this second anointing was done some time after the baptism, and had always been the function of

[1] *E. and H.* iii. 54; Barmby, 56.

[2] *E. and H.* viii. 27. They may be seen in the mosaics of the time, especially in those of St. Vitale, where they are worn by the Emperor, the officers of his Court, the Bishop of Ravenna, and his deacons. The Pope's *campagi*, it would seem, had something special about them, for a scholiast of a letter of Anastasius the *aprocrisiarius* says he had received, as a relic, one of the *campagi* of Pope Martin, and says of it, "*quod nullus alius inter homines portet nisi sanctus Papa Romanus*" (Duchesne, 395).

a bishop if he was available, and a bishop alone had marked the forehead with a cross, constituting the rite of confirmation.[1] Gregory, however, relaxed the Rule when there was a lack of bishops.[2]

In regard to the minor officials, the churches, says Mr. Dudden, were cared for by sacristans, *mansionarii*, who kept them clean, saw to the lamps, kept the worshippers in order, and opened and closed the buildings at the proper time. Alms were distributed in the porches, and beggars had their stations there as in the present day. The custom of burial in churches had begun, and bishops had exacted money for the privilege. Gregory said it was good for those whose sins were not great, but perilous and presumptuous for the wicked to have this privilege; and he states how martyrs had appeared and ordered such bodies to be removed, and foul spirits came and dragged them out by the feet, while shrieks of agony were sometimes heard coming from a tomb, and the corpses mysteriously disappeared.[3]

In regard to the jurisdiction of the secular courts over the clergy, Justinian had exempted bishops from trial by them for any cause without the Emperor's consent; the rest of the clergy were also exempted except for the graver charges of murder, rebellion, etc., and in civil causes unless both sides agreed. Gregory provided that, except as here mentioned, ecclesiastical offences should be tried by the episcopal

[1] See Barmby, *Epistles of Gregory*, vol. i. p. 153, note.
[2] *E. and H.* iv. 9 and 26; Barmby, iv. 9 and 27.
[3] *Op. cit.* i. 352, giving various references to the Pope's letters.

courts alone, and when the defendant was a bishop, by his metropolitan or patriarch, and in default by the Apostolic See, the head of all the Churches. Bishops, again, had the right of intercession for those condemned in the secular courts; Gregory made regulations to prevent this dangerous privilege from being abused. Bishops, again, were empowered in many cases to mitigate cases of wrong-doing, and of cruelty towards, and persecution of, the poor and of helpless people to whom the courts were not always accessible because of their poverty. Gregory further regulated the right of asylum so that it should not be used to screen wrong-doers. In the case of runaway slaves care was to be taken that they had not behaved ill to their masters. If the latter recovered them by a promise of better behaviour and then broke it, they were to be excommunicated. Gregory's theory was that sanctuary was not a protection for the guilty, but only a guarantee of fair treatment.[1]

Scandalous or lapsed priests were deprived of their orders and reduced to the status of laymen, and in bad cases excommunicated, and were never allowed to resume their former life. Gregory was particularly exacting in regard to the complete and final nature of this penalty. Lapsed priests might be received in monasteries, and it was enjoined that they should, in fact, be sent to them and do ample penance. The rule was rigidly applied to all the orders from bishops to subdeacons. Lapsed monks

[1] Dudden, i. 394.

and even abbots were treated more tenderly, and after fitting penance were allowed to resume their old life, the distinction being that no man ought to perform the *priestly* office again, after lapsing.

In regard to church fees, Gregory adhered to the decree of Gelasius and that of the third Council of Braga, by which the clergy were not to charge for baptism or confirmation, nor at the consecration of churches; both practices he forbids. Gregory, however, maintained an arrangement of Pelagius the Second, by which the parochial clergy contributed a fixed sum to pay the expenses of the attendants of the bishop when confirming. He also forbade fees being exacted for ordinations, for marriages of inferior clerics, or the veiling of virgins, but did not object to spontaneous gifts being given on such occasions to the bishops, though he discouraged the practice and would accept none himself. He further forbade the buying of a burial-place by any one for a price, quoting the conduct of the men of Sichem towards Abraham. No charge was to be made for burial, even to a stranger. A voluntary gift of something for lights by the relative or heirs was, however, permissible.[1]

[1] Dudden, i. 400 and 401.

CHAPTER III

HAVING thus glanced over the Pope's method of dealing with the secular clergy over whom he presided, let us now turn to the regulars whom he deemed his special children.

As the great monkish order of St. Benedict had so much to do with the evangelisation of Britain, it is necessary that we should realise the life these monks led and the conditions under which they did their work.

What we know of the founder of the Benedictine order is based almost entirely on the biography of him by St. Gregory and incorporated in his *Dialogues*. It is a typical "Saint's life," in which the miraculous and the fantastic are so mingled with the story that it is almost impossible to disentangle what is true from what is fictitious. It affords an excellent example of the extreme credulity of the times. Gregory claims to have collected the facts he mentions mainly from four of St. Benedict's disciples: Constantine, who succeeded him in the government of the Monastery of St. Cassino; Valentinian, who long ruled in the Benedictine monastery near the Lateran; Simplicius, who was the third abbot of Monte Cassino; and Honoratus,

who governed Benedict's original foundation at Subiaco.[1]

Gregory tells us Benedict was born at Nursia, now called Norcia, a town which still survives among the Apennines at the foot of Monte Sibillini. The famous Roman rebel, Sertorius, was also born there. Benedict sprang from noble parents. Later biographers associate him, as later biographers of Gregory associated that Pope, with the Anicia gens, but with very slight warrant. He was sent to Rome to be educated, but was as little attracted by the study of letters as he was by the frivolous and vicious atmosphere of the capital, and was carried along by the *afflatus* which at this time urged so many noble youths to forsake the world and to devote themselves to the austere life of a recluse, and became an anchorite in a secluded cave amidst bramble-covered rocks at Subiaco, at the source of the Anio, which is still known as the Sacro Speco. There he adopted a monk's dress, and there he lived for several years a life of extreme asceticism, until, his fame having spread, disciples came to him from all sides, chiefly those of high and noble rank. Among them Equitius, with his boy Maurus, who afterwards became his favourite disciple. The French claim him as the founder of the congregation of St. Maur. There also came Tertullus, the senator, with his little boy Placidus, who was but seven or eight years old, and others. It became necessary to organise the gathering, and

[1] *Dial.* ii. Prol.

Benedict accordingly founded twelve monasteries, each with twelve monks and an abbot, while the rest and more devoted of his disciples remained in attendance on the master himself at the Sacro Speco.[1] These monasteries were planted along the heights bordering the lonely valley of the Anio.

After spending thirty years at Subiaco, Benedict was induced by the persecutions of a neighbouring priest and other reasons to migrate to another home, and with a number of his most famous devotees he moved fifty miles away and settled on a hill overlooking the meandering Lirio, known all over the world as Monte Cassino. There he founded another monastery, which became the mother of the great Order he had unwittingly started on its wonderful journey. Unwittingly I say, for it is impossible to believe that whatever ambitions he may have had, he could have dreamt of the vast army of monks who presently looked upon him as their father, and who lived in thousands of abbeys in all parts of Christendom. No fewer than 15,070 Benedictine houses had been founded before the Council of Constance. At Monte Cassino Benedict lived for fifteen years longer and then died, "supported on his feet," we are told, "and with his hands extended to heaven and praying." This was probably in the year 543 or 544. He was buried in the same grave with his sister, Scholastica, who had also adopted the religious life in a cell close by the monastery. He was then sixty-three or sixty-four years old, having been born in

[1] *Dial.* ii. 3.

MONTE CASINO, THE CRADLE OF THE BENEDICTINES.

To face p. 64.

480. He was Gregory's great ideal. "Long after his death, an archbishop of Salerno, who had himself been trained at Monte Cassino, bestowed on him the well-deserved title—*Fundator placidae quietatis.*" From his heart, says Pope Urban the Second, as from the fountainhead of Paradise, there sprang the religion of the monastic order—*Monasticae ordinis religio.*

The most important thing to remember about Benedict is that he was not a priest. He was simply a monk, and a monk at this time meant a layman who had taken vows, was tonsured and devoted to religion, and living with others in community, according to a Rule. The great feature of Benedict's polity was his Rule. It is that which gave his Order its great influence and caused it to supplant so many earlier Orders. It will be well to realise what it consisted in.

The earlier monks had one dominant motive in retiring from the world, namely, to lead a life of secluded and ascetic contemplation. Benedict introduced a new notion into his Rule, namely, the duty of work as well as contemplation. "Probably not even the founder himself foresaw all the prospective advantages of his law, which was destined not merely to make many a wilderness and solitary plain to rejoice with fertility, but to expand further into a noble, intellectual fruitfulness, which has been the glory of the Benedictine Order."[1] Idleness, according to Benedict, was the great enemy of the

[1] Dr. Littledale, *Ency. Brit.* 9th ed., article "Benedict."

soul, an aphorism we find it convenient to remember in another form when we say that the devil finds work for idle hands to do. Constant occupation, absolute obedience, and simplicity of living were his three cardinal principles.

Benedict's Rule consists of seventy-three clauses. It begins with a kind of sermon and then goes on to describe the various kinds of monks then existing, such as Cœnobites, Anchorites, Sarabaites (living by twos and threes together, without any fixed rule or lawful superior), and Gyrovagi, vagrant tramps, who were continually bringing discredit on the monks' profession. It was the great object of Benedict's Rule to get rid of the two latter classes, and he accordingly added a fourth to the three usual monkish vows of obedience, poverty, and humility—namely, stability. This rule bound a monk, after a year's probation, to perpetual vows, and constrained him to continue to reside during his life at the monastery where he had professed, unless transferred either temporarily or permanently by his superiors.

To the Abbot, Benedict gave absolute authority: there was no other way of maintaining discipline in a large community of men of different temperaments and characters. He was to be obeyed in all things. *Obedientia sine mora* was the prime rule of the monastic life, and every monk was to sacrifice his individual will in all things. "We foresee," says Benedict, "that it is expedient for the preservation of peace and charity that the entire government of the monastery depend upon the will of the Abbot."

No one must therefore question his orders or appeal from his decision. No one must go anywhere or do anything, however trifling, or receive any letter or present without the Abbot's knowledge and consent. The Abbot alone was to prescribe rewards or punishments: all must concur in his decision. No one should hold any intercourse with a contumacious monk, or one under the Abbot's displeasure, or defend or take his part.

As a restraint upon the Abbot, it was provided that when a vacancy in the post arose, he should be elected by the community and from its own members, and they were to be guided by the virtue, learning, and practical wisdom of the candidate.

Secondly, the Abbot, like the rest of the community, was bound by "the Rule," which contains many injunctions as to his conduct and about his duty. While strict to show continual kindness and patience he was not to be forgetful of the individual idiosyncrasies of the various members of his flock. The Abbot again, in matters of difficulty, was bidden to consult with the whole community (even the youngest being allowed to speak), and on minor matters he was to take counsel with the older monks.

The obedience due to the Abbot was to be extended to the Prior and the deans (officers set over ten men in the larger monasteries), who were to be chosen from the brethren for their merits and learning, were to be treated with suitable respect by the monks, and were to be similarly obedient to the Abbot, who could always depose them. No worldly

differences in rank or social position were tolerated among the monks themselves, all being in that sense equal. On the other hand, a seniority was conceded to the older monks and those whose lives were especially exemplary, or had been specially selected by the Abbot, and they were to be styled "Father" by the juniors. The latter were to ask their blessing, to rise from their seats when they passed, and never to sit in their presence without permission.

In order to encourage the habit of implicit obedience and deference, Benedict was continually inculcating the virtue he valued most, namely, that of humility, which he described as forming a series of steps on the ladder of an ideal life like those on Jacob's ladder. The first was the fear of God; the second, the surrender of self-will; the third, implicit obedience to authority; the fourth, patience under difficulties and ill-treatment; the fifth, confession to the Abbot of all secret sins of act or thought; the sixth, contentment with the meanest condition; the seventh, not only the declaration but the inward feeling of inferiority to others; the eighth, obedience to the Rule and the superiors; the ninth, the practice of silence; the tenth, abstention from laughter and buffoonery; the eleventh, the habit of speaking briefly, quietly, gravely, and humbly; lastly, the twelfth, the adoption of a humble demeanour, with the head bent and the eyes fixed on the ground, and this at all times, whether at work, in the oratory, the monastery, the garden, field, or road.

Benedict probably instituted what has become a

golden rule of all monastic establishments, namely, the system of the eight daily services, known as the Canonical Hours. These were fixed at intervals of three hours throughout the day and night, and were named Nocturns, Matins, Prime, Tierce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline. At the Hours a portion of the Psalter was recited, and the whole Psalter was gone through weekly, starting again every Sunday at Matins. These Hours were sung or recited in quire, when all but the sick or those having dispensation must attend. Opportunities for private prayer and meditation were also provided. The only reading permitted to the monks was from the Bible or other religious books, and for this, two or three hours daily were set apart on weekdays and a longer time on Sundays.

The Abbot or his deputy was to give notice of the different church services, and no incompetent person was to be allowed to read or chant. Chapter xxi. of the Rule provided for the appointments of deans (officers set over ten monks) in the large monasteries, to be chosen by merit and not by seniority. The next chapter contained directions about the dormitory. Each monk was to have a separate bed with a straw mattress, blanket, quilt, and pillow, and was to sleep in his habit and girdle, so as to be ready to rise at a moment's notice, while a light was to be kept burning in the dormitory till the morning.

The next eight chapters dealt with offenders, for whom a graduated scale of penalties was provided: first, private admonition; next, separation from the

brethren at meals, or recreation, and exclusion from reading the lessons or intoning; then scourging, and finally expulsion in the case of hardened offenders. The outcast might be received again three times on condition of forfeiting his seniority and descending to the lowest place. After a third expulsion, return was debarred.

Chapter xxxi. dealt with the cellarer and his duties. He was steward, and had charge of all the stores and had to serve them out. Then comes a chapter dealing with the inferior officers, who had charge of the tools, clothes, and goods of the monastery.

Chapter xxxii. embodied the regulations about poverty and the abnegation of private property, which were so stringently exacted by the various later reformers of monachism. "Especially let this sin be cut away from the monastery by the very roots," says Benedict, "that no one presume without leave of the Abbot to give, receive, or hold as his own anything whatsoever, either book, or writing tablets, a pen, or anything at all; for monks are men whose very bodies and wills are not in their own power." The Abbot was to supply all necessaries, and any murmuring at the manner of distribution was treated as a very serious offence.

Chapter xxxv. provided that the brethren were to serve in the kitchen by turns, unless excused by reason of sickness or some other more important occupation. They worked in relays for a week at this duty, and those on duty on Saturday night were to clean up and to deliver all the clothes and

utensils to the cellarer in good condition for their successors. They were to begin their week's work with prayers that they might do it well, and end it by making amends for what they had done ill. The sick were to be patient and not exacting. An infirmary was to be provided for them, and a competent attendant was charged with their care. They were to have baths as often as was expedient, and allowed a flesh diet. Old men and children were also dispensed from the rigour of the Rule, and might have their meals before the usual hours. During meals reading aloud was prescribed, but no conversation, even about the subject of the reading, was to take place between the brethren, who at meals were only to speak by signs. The reader was to be appointed for a week, and entered on his duties on Sunday. He was allowed a little food before beginning, but was to finish his meal afterwards with the kitcheners and waiters.

Chapters xxxix. and xl. prescribed the daily rations of meat and drink. These meals consisted of two hot dishes (*pulmentaria*), to permit a choice of food to those to whom one might be distasteful; a third dish of fruit or young vegetables was given occasionally. A pound of bread was served out daily for each monk, which the Abbot could increase in the case of the hard-worked, while children's rations were similarly diminished. The flesh of four-footed beasts was forbidden to all except the sick and weakly; the use of poultry, eggs, and fish was optional. One pint of wine was allowed daily

to each monk; but the monks were instructed that voluntary abstinence in this matter was the best, and they were not to murmur when the house was too poor to provide it. On weekly fast days, and from the middle of September till Easter, one meal a day was allowed. During the rest of the year and on Sunday there was a dinner in the middle of the day and a supper in the evening. The times of meals at different parts of the year were prescribed by Rule xli., but both meals should be taken by daylight, without need of lamps. In the evening the monks were to assemble together for reading, which was to be preferably from the famous *Collations* of Abbot Cassian of Lerins, in Gaul, or the Lives of the Fathers. Cassian's works are referred to by Gregory as "*bene viventium et obedientium monachorum instrumenta virtutum.*" This reading was to be after Compline, after which silence was to be strictly maintained. Chapters xliii. to xlvi. imposed penalties for minor offences, such as being late for prayers or meals.

Chapter xlviii. of the Rule is one of the most important ones. It refers to the duty of daily manual labour and is headed with the terse aphorism, "Idleness is an enemy of the soul" (*Otiositas inimica est animae*). The kind of work each man was to do was apportioned by the Abbot, according to the different gifts of each. The more learned monks taught in the schools, others worked in the fields, the orchard, or garden, or about the repairs of the buildings, or in different handicrafts, others waited

on the sick or attended on the Abbot and his guests, others, again, looked after the external business of the Abbey, while all were supposed to take their turn at baking, cooking the meals, and cleaning the rooms.

The Rule provided that the monks were to distribute the time not already taken up with prayers, meals, and sleep, into periods of manual labour or devout reading. From Easter to October they were to work from Prime to the fourth hour; from the fourth to nearly the sixth hour they were to read. On rising from their meals at the sixth hour they were to rest in silence on their beds—the familiar siesta of warm countries. Those, however, who preferred to read might do so, provided they did not disturb the others. Nones were to be said about the middle of the eighth hour, *i.e.* 2.30 p.m., and then work was to be resumed till evening. From the 1st of October to the beginning of Lent they were to read till the second hour, then to say Tierce, after which to work till the ninth hour, when they were to leave off, and after their meal to read spiritual books or the Psalms. In Lent they were to read from the morning till the third hour, then to work till the end of the tenth hour; and every one was to have a book given out to him from the library at the beginning of Lent, which he was to read through, while two senior brethren were to go the rounds during reading-hours to see that the monks were actually reading, and not lounging and gossiping. On Sundays all were to read throughout the day except those with special duties. Those

who could not or would not either read or meditate must have some special work assigned them to keep them from idling. Sickly and delicate brethren were to be given light work.

Chapter xlix. suggested, without commanding, some voluntary self-denial in Lent, to be undertaken only with the Abbot's approval, no doubt to prevent vainglorious austerities.

The next chapter provided that brethren working at a distance must say their "Hours" where they happened to be. When sent on an errand from which they were to return the same day, they were not to take refreshments until their return, without the Abbot's consent. This was doubtless to prevent their making improper acquaintances in taverns, etc. Chapter liii. contained rules for entertaining guests. The most noteworthy of these was that the Abbot was allowed to break his fast with his guests, except on a Church fast day, so as to bear them company at meal times, and when the guests were few he could ask any of the brethren to eat with them. The kitchen for the Abbot and guests was to be separate from the general kitchen, and served by the same two brethren for a year, so that no extra labour should be thrown on the kitcheners. The guest-room was to be in charge of the hospitaller, and no other monk, without permission, was to speak to or mix with the guests.

Monks were not to receive letters, tokens, or gifts, even from their nearest kin, without the Abbot's consent, nor to give such things to others.

In regard to dress, Benedict left it open to the Abbot, who had to provide it, to decide that best suited to the climate and locality, merely prescribing that in temperate places two habits and two tunics should be provided for night and day wear. The former were called *cucullæ* or cowls, and doubtless resembled the cloaks of the later Capuchins. In one of Gregory's letters to the Presbyter Palladius he tells him he is sending him a cuculla and a tunic.[1] The duplication of these clothes was meant to provide for summer and winter wear. The garments for the latter use were to be made of thick stuff lined with wool. Care was to be taken that the clothes fitted. Each monk was also to be provided with a scapular,[2] shoes and stockings, a girdle, a knife, and a needle, a style (*graphium*), a handkerchief, and writing tablets. If a monk went on a journey he was also given a pair of drawers which, on his return, were to be replaced in the common wardrobe. For those who were healthy, and especially the young, the luxury of a bath was seldom provided, which shows how in some ways we have moved on since the sixth century.

Each monk was to have a change of garments to allow of washing, and another, for a journey, to be made of better materials and kept in the common wardrobe when not in use. Those who were skilled as craftsmen among the brethren could

[1] *E. and H.* xi. 1.

[2] A sleeveless woollen garment passed over the head and falling down over the breast and back (Dr. Littledale, *Ency. Brit.* 9th ed. xvi. 705).

make various articles with the Abbot's permission, and if for sale, the objects were to be sold at a fair price rather below than above the current rate.

New members were not to be admitted too easily. The postulant was to knock for admission in vain for four or five days, then to be brought into the guest-room for a few days more, and then to be transferred to the House of Novices, where he was to remain for two months under the charge of a senior monk. If he still remained of the same mind, the Rule was to be read over to him, and the option of going or staying offered him. If he decided to stay, he was to return to the Novice House for six months' further probation, when the Rule was to be again read over to him, and yet a third time after a further term of four months. If he still remained of the same mind, he was then to divest himself of all his property, and either give it to the poor or to the monastery. He then signed the Act of Profession, including the Vow of Stability, which he was to lay on the altar with his own hand.

Chapter lix. provided for the dedication of children, noble or poor, by their parents, to be brought up as monks. St. Benedict required a promise from the latter never to endow the oblate with any property, either directly or in trust, though they might leave their property to the monastery, reserving a life interest to themselves.

The next chapter regulated the lives of priests who might wish to enter the monastery. They were to enjoy no relaxations or priority in regard to

their priesthood, but the Abbot might assign clerical functions to them, and similarly to those in minor orders. Provision was also made for the reception of stranger monks as guests, and also for their joining the community if they so wished. The Abbot was to listen to the criticisms of such strangers, and he could, if he so pleased, give them higher standing than that of their entrance. No such monk was, however, to be admitted without the consent of, or letters commendatory from, his former abbot.

The Abbot might choose a monk for ordination as priest or deacon, but he was to have no precedence in consequence, except when officiating, or in case the Abbot and the brethren concurred in giving it to him on account of superior merit. If he misbehaved he was to be reported to the Bishop, and if he persistently disregarded the Rule he was to be expelled. The Abbot might be selected either by the whole body or by a select electoral committee, and the lowest in standing might be chosen if fit. If he turned out to be unfit, the bishop of the diocese, or the neighbouring abbots, or even the neighbouring laity might annul the election and make a fresh choice.

If the Abbot and the Prior were often at feud, Benedict counselled dispensing with the latter unless the circumstances needed one. The Abbot might nominate a brother to the post, but he was to be as entirely subject to himself as any other monk, and might be admonished, deposed, or expelled.

Chapter lxvi. provided for the appointment of a porter to answer at the gate, and that every

house should have its own well, mill, garden, bakery, and handicraftsmen, to avoid the necessity of intercourse with the outside world. No monk was to leave the monastery without the Abbot's leave, and on his return from any journey he was to beg the prayers of the community for any faults committed by him in their absence, and was forbidden to speak of what he had seen or heard outside.

If a monk received a hard or impossible command he was to bear it patiently and obediently, and if he found it beyond his powers he was to mention it quietly to his superior. If the latter was still exacting, he must try and comply as best he could. Gregory in his *Dialogues* tells a touching story of a saintly monk named Libertinus, who was beaten over the head and face with a footstool till he was black and blue by a superior. He submitted with patience, and when asked how his face came to be in such a plight merely answered, "Yesterday, for my sins, I came in contact with a footstool, and suffered thus."[1] Monks were not to defend each other against their superiors in the monastery, even if they happened to be kinsmen. They were not to strike or excommunicate each other without the Abbot's consent. Children under fifteen were to be under discipline from all the monks; but the latter when unduly severe, or who should chastise children over fifteen without the Abbot's consent, were themselves to be punished. The Rule closed with a note to the effect that it was not offered as an ideal of perfection, or even as equal to the

[1] *Op. cit.* i. 2; Barmby, *Gregory the Great*, 55.

teachings of Cassian and Basil, but for mere beginners in the spiritual life who might thence proceed further.

When we look over these clauses of a most remarkable monument we shall cease to wonder, perhaps, how a Rule of Life which was afterwards to enable large numbers of men of different conditions and stations of life and different temperaments to live together with little friction and eminent comfort should have lasted so long without amendment and alteration, and should still remain the ideal of all Monkish Rules. What we are most struck by is the singular moderation and good sense of the provisions, the stand taken in them against extravagance, extreme rigour, and petty and burdensome regulations, especially against the exaggerated mortifications and austerities which had converted the lives of anchorites in the East and West into mere shadows of those of Indian fakirs, and which were so much imitated in later and more exacting Orders of Reformed Benedictines, like the Trappists and others. The rigidity of these later Rules is in striking contrast with the adaptability of that of St. Benedict, in which so much is left to the personal initiative of the Abbot. It strikes one as the very ideal of a Rule of Life to be pursued by men living in community in the various and varying latitudes of the world, from the tropics to the coldest and most harsh.

"Plain and poor as the prescribed food and lodging appears," says Dr. Littledale, "if tested by modern notions, yet it is to be remembered that what is called 'comfort' is a wholly recent idea, and even

still scarcely familiar, it may be said, out of Great Britain and its colonies. The scale of living appointed by the Rule secures a greater abundance of the necessaries of life, not only than was at all common among the Italian poor of the sixth century, but than is to be found amongst the humbler peasantry of any European country at the present day; while even the excluded superfluities entered but little into the habits of any save the very wealthy. . . . The most valuable feature of the Rule is the position of dignity it gives to work. It is scarcely possible to realise at the present day the dishonour into which toil of all kinds had sunk in the days of Benedict. Not only had the institution of slavery degraded many kinds of occupation, but the gradual disappearance from Italy of the yeoman class, ruined and exiled by the concentration of great estates (*latifundia*), or slain in the ceaseless battles of competitors for empire, or of barbarian invaders, left few but serfs and herdsmen to till the soil, while the military habits of the invading tribes led them to contemn any life except that of a warrior. It is the special glory of Benedict that he taught the men of his day that work, sanctified by prayer, is the best thing that man can do, and the lesson has never been quite lost sight of since."[1]

Benedict's original Monastery of Monte Cassino was destroyed by the Lombards in 589. As we have seen, its abbot and other monks sought shelter at Rome and were credited with having persuaded

[1] Littledale, *Ency. Brit.* 9th ed. vol. xvi. p. 705.

Gregory to found his own monastery. The emigrants themselves planted the first Benedictine convent in Rome, near the Lateran Palace, which was named after the two St. Johns—the Evangelist and the Baptist. Its first abbot was called Valentinian, and during the period of one hundred and fifty years, while the monastery at Monte Cassino was in ruins and abandoned, its Roman daughter flourished greatly. It then fell into decadence, but was restored again in the eighth century by Gregory II. This monastery disappeared in the later Middle Ages.[1]

It was from these emigrants from Monte Cassino that Gregory probably imbibed the love for the monastic life which was his ruling passion in after life, and which led him to devote so much of his fortune to the foundation of monasteries.

The monasteries at this time, especially those in the more secluded districts which had not been ravaged by the barbarians, were the most prosperous institutions of the age, havens of refuge for the destitute and oppressed. In them men and women found that peace and rest and idyllic life which was impossible elsewhere. Gregory describes the monks in his *Dialogues* as engaged in homely country pursuits, looking after their gardens, mowing hay in the fields, building walls, baking bread, gathering olives, looking after the oratory, cleaning the lamps, etc. etc. In one case only do we find an instance of monks engaged in copying manuscripts.[2] The monasteries benefited much from the gifts and

[1] Gregorovius, *op. cit.* It. ed. i. 363, notes. [2] *Dialogues*, i. 4.

legacies of the rich people who at this period crowded into them to enjoy the simple life, and they were consequently well appointed, had their farms, their oliveyards, and vineyards.[1]

There has been considerable discussion as to the Rule adopted by Gregory in his monasteries. Mabillon and the Benedictines have generally argued that he adopted the Benedictine one. The Jesuit Baronius suggests that he adopted that of St. Equitius, of whom Gregory gives an account in his *Dialogues*. *Inter alia*, he says of him that he founded many monasteries in the province of Valeria in the neighbourhood of Lake Fucini in the Abruzzi. The notion that Gregory followed Equitius in his Rule seems most improbable. Equitius was a person of slight culture and much rusticity, and his Rule must have been a crude performance.[2] It is very unlikely that Gregory should have gone to such a guide in matters so near his own heart. He always speaks of St. Benedict in laudatory terms, and apostrophises his Rule for its marvellous discretion and lucidity,[3] and

[1] Dudden, i. 346.

[2] Gregory in his *Dialogues* has described this precursor of the itinerant evangelists of modern dissent: "He had such a zeal for winning souls that he travelled up and down the country, visiting towns, villages, churches, and private houses, and trying by all means to stir men's hearts to the love of the heavenly country. His dress was so coarse and shabby that many who did not know him disdained even to reply to his salutation. He rode upon the worst beast that could be found, with a halter for bridle and for saddle a sheep's skin; on right and left hung leather bags stuffed with parchments of the Holy Scriptures. Everywhere he went 'he opened the fountain of Scripture, and watered men's souls with his sermons'" (*Dialogues*, i. 4; Dudden, i. 347–348).

[3] *Dial.* ii. 36.

we can hardly doubt that it was St. Benedict's Rule that he made the basis of his own regulations. This he seems to have somewhat altered and adapted to the conditions existing in large cities like Rome. *Inter alia*, he devoted more time to study and less to work. The Rule thus modified was known as St. Gregory's. Such a Rule is referred to very early, namely, in a letter written by Pope Honorius to Honorius, Archbishop of Canterbury, in which he speaks of St. Gregory's Rule (*sectantemque . . . Sancti Gregorii regulam*).[1]

St. Dunstan prescribed that the seven canonical hours should be recited by the monks of Canterbury during Easter, "after the fashion of St. Gregory" (*septem horae canonicae a Monachis in Ecclesia Dei, more canonicorum propter aucthoritatem S. Gregorii celebrandae sunt*). This custom was abolished by Lanfranc.[2]

Gregory treated the monks as quite a different order and class of beings to the working clergy, and it was he who first countenanced (in a moderate way) what became a very great evil in the Middle Ages, namely, the exemption of the regular clergy from episcopal control, which supervision had been insisted upon by the Council of Chalcedon.

This was not all. He endeavoured to draw a rigid line between monks and the secular clergy in other ways. He would not allow a priest or deacon

[1] *Bede, E. and H.* ii. 18.

[2] *Conc. Monast. apud Reiner*, par. iii. p. 899. Wilk. *Con. inter. Constit. Lanfranc.* i. 339. See also Lingard, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, i. 301, note.

to become an abbot unless he gave up his pastoral clerical functions, fearing that his less regulated life might impair the discipline of the monastery. It was, of course, necessary that some monks should be also priests in order to celebrate Mass in the communities; nor did the Pope wish to prevent monks becoming bishops, but every monk called to an ecclesiastical office, or benefice, was to leave his monastery and not return to it; nor would he consent that Urbicus, Abbot of St. Hermas and General Superior of the Sicilian monasteries, should be elected Archbishop of Palermo. He deemed the life of a monk and of an ecclesiastic to be incongruous and mutually injurious to each other.

He reformed and made more stringent the monastic discipline. He pitilessly deposed all abbots leading an irregular life, and forbade bishops to shelter rebellious or vagabond monks, or those who had been excommunicated by their abbots; nor would he permit the monks to wander about from one house to another, and to prevent this he insisted that each monastery should have a secular and paid procurator. To prevent incontinence he ordered that the monasteries of the two sexes should be planted far apart, and that on no pretence should women have access to communities of men. The Council of Chalcedon had expressly excommunicated all monks who married. Its decrees on this subject were strongly upheld by Gregory, but his kindly disposition was not equal to imposing very harsh penalties. When his friend Venantius, who had

been a monk, left his monastery and married, he expostulated with him and with his wife, and when he became a widower tried to induce him to adopt the monk's habit again; but when he died without having done so, he adopted and looked after his two orphan daughters, whom he styled *dulcissimae filiae.*

His father's three sisters had all taken vows, and he accordingly took a keen interest in the discipline of female communities, and he sustained by the doles and generosity of the Church 3000 nuns who had taken refuge in Rome from their ruined convents. He made an excellent rule that the abbesses chosen by the communities should be at least sixty years old, thus following up the regulation of Leo the First, which was in conformity with the decrees of several councils and was confirmed by a law of the Emperor Majorian passed in 458. He further insisted that nuns should not receive the veil and the solemn benediction, nor should their noviciate end until their fortieth year. The breach of this rule, and the pernicious and morbid argument that young girls should be encouraged to dedicate their virginity to God by which it was sustained, was the cause of infinite mischief and scandal in later centuries.

He was most sensible in deeming the contemplative life unsuited for many temperaments and for unquiet and restless souls, and he held that no one should become a monk who had not first tried an active life and tested his own capacity and tastes. He thus enlarged the noviciate to two years, St.

Benedict having prescribed one only. It was only after a trial of two years that the lay dress was to be discarded and the tonsure given; and he enjoined a married man who had left his wife to join a monastery in Sicily to return to her, which was another salutary dictate of good sense, since, if the practice had become general, it would have been an easy and demoralising form of divorce.

Gregory was a determined foe to monks owning private property ("peculiarity," as it was called) and therefore to their making wills. Those who wished for private property, he declared, had not the hearts of monks. On this rule being rigidly enforced in the economy of a monastery he was inexorable. We have a grim proof in a story told at this time of a monk named Justus, who had attended Gregory when he was ill, and had now himself to take to his bed. The latter confessed to his own brother Copiosus, who was also a monk, that in making a sacrifice of his worldly goods he had retained three gold pieces. Gregory having heard of this, ordered the Prior Pretiosus to forbid any of the other monks attending to him, commanded that when he died his body should be thrown upon a dunghill, and that the three gold pieces should be thrown into his grave with him, while they chanted, "Let thy gold perish with thee." This came about, but presently Gregory's heart seems somewhat to have melted, and after conferring with Pretiosus, he declared that the erring monk had been long enough in the flames, and he ordered thirty continuous Masses

to be said for his release. We read that the sinner afterwards appeared to Copiosus and told him that he had now been admitted to heaven.[1] These expiatory Masses were afterwards known as Gregorian Masses.

[1] *Dialogues*, vi. 55.

CHAPTER IV

HAVING largely forestalled our story in order to bring under one view the Pope's management and regulation of the clergy, secular and regular, over whom he presided, let us now revert again to his doings after he became Pope.

In order to understand his political position at this date it will be convenient to glance shortly at the administration of that part of Italy subject to the Empire at this time—a time of transition, when recent administrative changes had much altered it. I have condensed Mr. Dudden's admirable account of the subject so far as it refers to the principal officials.

The highest official in the land, and the vicegerent of the Emperor, was the Exarch, a title first applied by Pope Pelagius the Second among Western writers,[1] and first used in its true sense by Smaragdus (585–589), whose predecessor, Longinus, had been merely called Præfectus Ravennæ. He was styled "The Most Excellent Exarch," and also "Patrician," and was at the head of the civil service as well as of the army in Italy, and seems to have appointed all the civil and military officers there. "He could make peace or war on his own initiative, while the judicature and the finance were under

[1] *Labbe Conc.* v. 938.

his control." The power of this Byzantine Satrap was therefore virtually supreme wherever the Imperial rule was obeyed in Italy. He lived at Ravenna, where he held a replica of the Court of Byzantium in miniature, with a similar ceremonial, in which he was treated with the abject servility which the West had learnt from the East; even the highest dignitaries prostrating themselves on his approach, and addressing him in the most fulsome terms. When he entered a city the bishop and foremost citizens came out to meet and escort him with all the humility shown at Eastern courts.

This new dignitary had largely superseded the Prætorian prefect, who had formerly controlled the civil administration of Italy and been the chief official of the Empire after the Emperor, but who had had no military functions. He was still, however, a great personage, wearing a purple robe, using a silver inkstand, a gold pencase, and riding in a stately car. He still (subject to the Exarch) controlled the finances of Italy—the collection of taxes, the payment of salaries, the commissariat of the troops, etc.—though he no longer had legislative powers. He also retained a large judicial authority. He ranked next to the Exarch, was styled "Most Excellent" and "Most Eminent," lived at Classis, near Ravenna, where he had a large staff of functionaries, exercised a wide patronage, and tried and punished evil-doers among the officials.

The Præfect of the *City*, who was styled Most Illustrious, Glorious, and Magnificent, and whose

post had once been filled by Gregory himself, still retained, in the earlier part of the latter's popedom, the control of the administration within the walls, presided over the meetings of citizens, and helped the Pope in supplying the city with grain and the military officers in concerting plans of defence. His office was rapidly decaying, however, and he is last heard of in the year 599, and is not named again for two centuries. "He had, in fact," as Mr. Dudden says, "become little more than a dignified minister of police with a criminal jurisdiction."

It is doubtful whether the two subordinates of the ancient Prætorian prefects, namely, the Vicars, one of whom, the Vicarius Urbis, had jurisdiction over Central and Southern Italy, with his seat at Rome, and the other over the seven northern provinces, with his seat at Genoa, still existed. If they did so, they had become quite unimportant and dealt entirely with financial matters.

The Governors of provinces (styled *Judices Provinciarum* in the time of Justinian) still existed, but with much curtailed functions, which were purely judicial, and had been encroached upon by the bishops and the practice of settling disputes by arbitration. They cease to be mentioned in the beginning of the seventh century. Such were the principal officials responsible for the civil administration of Italy at this time.

A few words must now be said about the military officials. At their head was the Exarch above named, under whom were the Duces and the

Magistri Militum, or Generals, who differed, in that the former also exercised civil functions in a defined area, the latter were military officers pure and simple. While a single district could only have one Dux it might have several Magistri. In his letters,[1] Gregory mentions four of the latter officers in the district of Rome. The titles and functions were, however, not always logically distinguished, and were frequently confused. The Dux was supreme within his district and was a kind of minor Exarch, and tended more and more to become independent of his master at Ravenna ; he controlled the civil officers, dispensed justice, managed the finance, and sometimes interfered in ecclesiastical matters. He had his chartulary, notary, major-domus, and other officials.[2]

Below the Duces and Magistri Militum were the Tribunes, otherwise called Comites or Counts. They were military officers with civil functions, and appointed by the Exarch to take charge of and administer a single town. On one occasion we find Gregory sending a Tribune to take charge of Naples.[3]

As we have seen, the Senate, in the old sense of the word, had at this time ceased to exist. It had indeed been destroyed by the terrible slaughters of the Gothic wars. The remnant of its members who remained, reconstituted themselves as "the Senatus Romanus," and were assigned by Justinian the very meagre rôle of superintending weights and measures.

[1] *E. and H.* ii. 32, 33.

[2] In his letters Gregory mentions the Dukes of Sardinia, Ariminum, Campania, and Neapolis ; see Gregorovius, *op. cit.* i. 393, note 14.

[3] *Ib.* ii. 34.

Certain Roman senators are said to have been sent on an embassy to Constantinople in 579. After this the senate is not mentioned again till 757, when we find the name was used merely as a title of honour by the Roman magnates, and it would seem that the institution itself had ceased to exist. Meanwhile the municipal institutions of the provincial towns (*curiae*) continued to live for some time longer, but subject to crushing taxes.

It is clear that while the civil officials of the old Empire still existed it was as shadows of their former selves, and that, as Mr. Dudden says, the real forces of the Empire were the Army and the Church, while whole parts of the country were governed by martial law, which was inevitable in the face of the repeated invasions of the barbarians.[1]

Let us now revert to Gregory and his doings as Pope.

Gregory was still a deacon when elected Pope. The messenger who had been sent to Rome by Gregory of Tours for some relics received them from the hands of the Pope while still a deacon.[2] It was, in fact, a not unusual practice at this period to advance deserving deacons at one step to the rank of bishop.[3]

On his election Gregory duly sent synodical letters to inform the other patriarchs of the fact. These were addressed to John of Constantinople, Eulogius of Alexandria, Gregory of Antioch, John of Jerusalem, and, lastly, to Anastasius, ex-Patriarch

[1] Dudden, i. 176–186. [2] Greg. of Tours, lib. x. 1.
[3] *E. and H.* iii. 29, 39, 46; x. 13.

of Antioch, who had been illegally deposed from his office by the Emperor Justin in 570, but was afterwards restored by the Emperor Maurice. In these letters he styles each of the other patriarchs Most holy brother (*frater sanctissimus*), and claims no kind of superiority over them. In them he also makes his confession, in which he claims to receive the four Gospels and the four first councils, to which he parenthetically adds "the fifth," *i.e.* that held at Constantinople in 553 A.D., which he says he equally venerates, *pariter veneror*.[1]

The plague already mentioned was still raging when he was elected. Gregory of Tours, who was writing at the time, and whose information came from his own agent (an eye-witness), reports the address which the newly elected Pope made in the Lateran Basilica to the people of Rome, whom he styled "his very dear brothers," offering them consolation and advice. In view of the terrible calamity of the plague he further prescribed that at daylight on the following Wednesday (traditionally said to have been the 25th of April)[2] they should organise an imposing ceremony. They were to assemble in seven bodies and repeat a sevenfold litany. All the clergy were to set out with the priests of the sixth region from the Church of SS. Cosmas and Damian, while all the abbots and monks were to set out from the Church of the Martyrs SS. Gervasius and Protasius, with the priests of the fourth region. All the abbesses with their nuns were to set forth from the

[1] *E. and H.* i. 24; Barmby, i. 25. [2] Dudden, i. 219.

Church of SS. Marcellinus and Peter, the Martyrs, with the priests of the first region. All the children were to issue from the Church of the Martyrs John and Paul, with the priests of the second region. The laity were to set out from the Church of St. Stephen, with the priests of the seventh region; the widows from the Church of St. Euphemia, with the priests of the fifth region; and all the married women from the Church of St. Clement, with the priests of the third region. They should then all march together with prayers and tears to the Basilica of the Virgin Mary (*i.e.* S. Maria Maggiore), where the Pope would again address them, and they should there implore the Almighty's forgiveness for their sins. In the "Legenda Aurea" it is said that in this procession Gregory carried the famous picture of the Virgin which had been painted by St. Luke,[1] and when the plague at length ceased, a voice was heard above the picture singing, "*Regina coeli laetare*," etc.; to which Gregory added, "*Ora pro nobis, Deum rogamus, alleluia.*" Gregory also summoned the clergy together and ordered them to chant the Psalms and implore the pity of the Saviour during three days. Every three hours the choirs were to chant the Psalms and traverse the streets singing the *Kyrie eleison.* "Our deacon," says Gregory of Tours, "was present and assured us that while the people thus raised their voices in supplication eighty of them fell dead in the course of an hour" (*i.e.* from

[1] The pictures still in the churches of Ara Cœli and S. Maria Maggiore both claim to be that carried by the Pope (Hare's *Walks in Rome*, ii. 226, note 2).

the plague). Assuredly no ecclesiastical function in history is more full of tragic pathos than this famous procession. It is still commemorated by the great Rogation service on St. Mark's Day, *i.e.* the 25th of April.

It is from this time that there comes to us the beautiful legend of the angel who is said to have been seen by Gregory standing on the Mausoleum of Hadrian (thence afterwards called the Castle of St. Angelo), with his drawn sword, which he was seen to sheathe as the plague abated. For many centuries the figure of a gilded angel has stood on that tomb. Four of these angels have at different times been destroyed, and the present one is the fifth. It is bronze gilt, and was put up in the reign of Pope Benedict the Fourteenth. Gregorovius suggests that the legend probably arose from some statue, probably of a winged genius, which originally stood on the Mausoleum. An altar, now in the Capitoline Museum, bearing the representation of two footprints, formerly in the Church of Ara Cœli, was once popularly deemed to preserve the footprints of the angel seen by Gregory.[1]

The Pope having, as it was thought, cured the pestilence, now made arrangements to mitigate the famine which was impending in Italy, by the importation of grain from Africa and Sicily, which still remained subject to the Empire, and were rich and prosperous, and in both of which the Church had rich possessions. To face plague and famine

[1] Dudden, i. 220.

with such resources as were available was more easy, no doubt, to the quondam Præfect of the City than to steer through the political entanglements.

Italy then nominally belonged to the emperors as Ireland belonged to the Plantagenet kings. Their real authority was limited to the Exarchate of Ravenna and its dependencies, as that of the English kings was to "the Pale." The emperors had little or no interest in a depressing land, of whose miseries and complaints they chiefly heard, whose language they hardly knew, and whose ancient glory was no part of their real inheritance. They held on to the Exarchate just as the English kings held on to Calais as a fragment of a lost empire and as a source of revenue, and its successive governors, like the mediaeval Lords-Lieutenant of Ireland, were mostly undesirable people, whose exactions and treacheries were only matched by those of the Spanish viceroys in the New World. Each one looked on his appointment as an exile, and hardly one was a person of any capacity or public virtue.

Let us now try for a moment to realise the condition of Rome itself, and of its inhabitants, where the Pope's most important functions and power were exercised, and in the midst of which he passed his days. It is almost impossible to describe the woeful condition to which the magnificent capital of Augustus and Hadrian had been reduced.

"Everywhere," in the eloquent words of Mr. Dudden, "the eye was met by the melancholy magnificence of great works sinking into unregarded

ruin. The theatres were falling in pieces, the baths were dry and waterless, the temples were closed. In the open spaces of the city the weeds grew freely, the gardens and pleasure-grounds were choked with rubbish, and the grass was pushing through the broken pavements of the streets. On account of the destruction of the aqueducts and the consequent difficulty of getting water, the higher and more salubrious quarters of the city were deserted; and the vast private palaces of the nobles—so huge that it was remarked of them, 'a single house is a city'[1]—were empty and silent. The sumptuous shops, which had once been the pride of the luxury-loving Romans, were mostly closed. No libraries remained, save in a few churches. The 'mighty nation of statues' (*populus copiasissimus statuarum*),[2] which in prodigious numbers had once decorated the buildings and piazzas of Rome, and which even the Christian Prudentius had characterised as *the noblest ornaments of our fatherland*, were many of them broken or removed, or lay neglected at the foot of their pedestals, with no one to restore them into place. The city, in short, was a city of death; and Gregory might well have anticipated Montaigne's remark that there is nothing left of Rome but its grave.

"The appearance of the people was in keeping with the aspect of their city. There was no longer either wealth or talent left in Rome. The brilliant society so vigorously depicted by writers like Jerome and Ammianus Marcellinus had vanished utterly.

[1] *Olympiodorus*, ed. Bonn, p. 469. [2] Cassiod. vol. vii. 13.

The Epicuræan millionaires, the high-born matrons surrounded with troops of sycophants and gossips, the men of pleasure, the supple, scandal-purveying churchmen, the mercenary advocates, the light-hearted, pampered populace,—all these were seen no more. That self-indulgent, frivolous life had burnt quite out. Of the Romans of the sixth century, survivors of the Gothic War, all who were swayed by pleasure or ambition, all who cared for the splendour of the Court or for the society of the learned, or for opportunities of gaining distinction and of making money, had taken their departure to the New Rome on the Bosphorus, or had joined the Court of the Patrician at Ravenna. The very few who remained in Rome were for the most part little better than beggars,[1] living miserably in corners of the great ruinous mansions which they had no longer the means of keeping up, or huddled together in tenements in the lower quarters of the city, where they fell a prey to the malaria which was engendered from the swamps caused by the destruction of the aqueducts. The whole population, estimated in the time of Augustus at about a million, cannot in these days have exceeded forty thousand souls. And these were all that were left in a city which, besides innumerable public buildings, contained nearly eighteen hundred palaces for the wealthy and more than forty-six thousand lodging-houses for those less well-to-do.

[1] "*Tanta egestas et nuditas*," says Pope Pelagius in one of his letters, "*in civitate ista est, ut sine dolore et angustia cordis nostri homines, quos honesto loco natos idoneos noveramus, non possimus adspicere*" (Ep. 14; Migne, *Pat. Lat.* lxix. 408).

"Everything in the place was stagnant. Civil life was hopelessly dislocated. Political activity there was none. . . . There was no commerce or manufacture to restore prosperity. Learning had departed in the train of Wealth. Agriculture, which had revived under the rule of Theodoric, was utterly decayed. The Campagna, which once presented the appearance of 'a great park, studded with villages, farms, lordly residences, temples, fountains, and tombs,' was now a dangerous and pestilential wilderness, and nothing but the lines of broken aqueducts and the charred ruins of villas and country houses bore witness to the life that had once flourished there."[1]

It will be interesting to recall a striking instance of the migration of the upper classes to Constantinople at this time. It may be illustrated by the correspondence of Gregory with an aristocratic lady called Rusticiana, to whom the Pope wrote five letters. She was very rich, and Gregory rebukes her for forsaking her old home at Rome and migrating to Constantinople, and tries to persuade her to return. To this second migration she was not at all sympathetic, and she consoled her conscience with a pilgrimage to Mount Sinai and by sending the Pope some donations, including ten pounds of gold for the redemption of slaves, and certain hangings for the decoration of the Church of St. Peter. It seems she had written to ask that these hangings or draperies might be taken to St. Peter's Church

[1] Dudden, *op. cit.* i. 50–52. I have taken the liberty of quoting this fine and picturesque description of Rome as it was in the days of Gregory, which I think could not be improved.

with a procession of clergy singing a litany. Gregory says this was not done, because the instruction reached him after the hangings; but Symmachus ("the magnificent lord," as he styles him), with those of her household, had been able to do otherwise what she had desired should be done by the priests in procession. These hangings were for the shrine of St. Peter. Gregory calls her "Our glorious daughter" and also "Patricia."[1]

The then condition of the ancient metropolis of the world, as here pictured, has inspired one of Gibbons' most magnificent sentences: "The lofty tree," he says, "under whose shade the nations of the earth had reposed, was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on the ground." These were the conditions under which Gregory had to begin his work. He was crippled by the hapless and hesitating policy of the emperors. Their courtiers were doubtless jealous of the resourceful Bishop who represented authority on the Tiber and who dared to undertake responsibilities, and they were always ready to humiliate him. On the other hand was the continual danger of an attack from the Lombards, "whose only law," he plaintively tells us, "was the sword." There was a never-ending struggle between these vigorous northern warriors and the soldiery commanded by the Exarch, and between the two the position of Rome and its dependencies was sometimes desperate.

"I was obliged," Gregory wrote to the Emperor,

[1] *E. and H.* xi. 26; Barmby, xi. 40; Gregorovius, i. p. 395, note 27.

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"to see with my own eyes the Romans led into Francia with ropes round their necks like dogs to be sold in the market." The Pope himself provided what was most urgent, wrote to the military leaders to encourage them in resistance, pointed out to the soldiers assembled at Naples the chief whom they should follow, fed the people, and paid the troops their wages and the barbarians their contributions of war, all at the expense of the ecclesiastical treasury. "The Emperor," he wrote to the Empress, "has a treasure for his troops at Ravenna, but as for me, I am the treasurer of the Lombards at Rome."

As I have said, the kingdom of the Lombards in the north was separated from the aggressive duchy of Spoleto in Central Italy by a long strip of territory, through which there passed a branch of the Flaminian Way called the Via Anina or Amerina,[1] and along which were the towns of Sutrium, Polimartium, Horta, Tuder, Ameria, Perugia, Lucerola, etc. The possession of this strip of country was most important strategically for the Romans; not only did it separate their mortal foes, but it was the only way, in Roman hands, by which Rome and Ravenna could communicate.

In the earlier part of 592, Arnulf, Duke of Spoleto, continued the desultory war against the Roman province, the strength of whose scanty garrisons had been so much sapped by the recent pestilence and famine, and captured the towns on the Flaminian Way already named. He then advanced on Rome

[1] See *Lib. Pont.* i. p. 312 and notes.

itself. The Pope defended the place with such resources as he had, but feeling the struggle to be hopeless without some Imperial aid, he determined to make a peace or truce with Arnulf, which meant, no doubt, a large payment out of the papal exchequer.

He hardly realised, perhaps, how perilous such a peace was for the Empire, since it left the recently captured towns in the hands of a persistent enemy. The Exarch and his officials were naturally exasperated with Gregory, and, repudiating his treaty, marched along the Flaminian Way, recapturing the towns, and approached Rome, which they entered with their forces, and there was probably an uncomfortable quarter of an hour between the Exarch and the Pope.

Agilulf, Duke of Turin, who became King of the Lombards in the year of Gregory's accession to the Papacy, married the beautiful Bavarian princess, Theodelinda, the widow of the late Lombard King, Antharis, and thus secured the throne. He was aroused to fury by the recapture of the towns on the Flaminian Way and the alleged breach of the treaty which Arnulf had made with Gregory. He marched south, recaptured the towns, and laid siege to Rome.

It would hardly be possible to match the pathos of Gregory's letters and sermons at this time, when it was his cruel fate to watch, as he tells us, "over these crumbling walls, these overthrown palaces, these buildings worn out with old age."

While the Lombards were attacking the city he was engaged in preaching a series of forty-two homilies on the prophecies and visions of Ezekiel, a very

favourite book with the mystics of the cloister, who themselves constantly saw visions. These homilies are still extant. In one of them he complains of the obscurity of the text, and then tells us he had heard that King Agilulf had crossed the Po, intending to attack, and asks: "How can a poor soul thus troubled and distracted penetrate into such mysteries?"[1] In another homily he says: "Let no man blame me if I put an end to this discourse. You all perceive how our tribulations increase. The sword and death are everywhere. Some return to us with their hands cut off, with the news that others are taken or killed. I must be silent because my soul is weary of life." As a matter of fact, Agilulf, who devastated the Campagna and the country round, did not proceed to capture the city, which was thus spared a repetition of the previous sackings by Alaric, Genseric, and Totila. This lucky exemption was doubtless due to several causes—the dangers of the Campagna fever and a possible diversion by the Exarch; perhaps, also, to Gregory's negotiations with Agilulf's wife, Theodelinda, who had acquired a great influence over the Lombards. Although a Bavarian princess, she was descended from the old Lombard kings on her mother's side. She was orthodox and thus befriended the Pope, whose faithful friend she became, and it was probably by her intervention that when war was presently renewed between her husband and the Exarch, Gregory was enabled to obtain a special truce for Rome and its

[1] *Vide* Hom. 18.

surrounding territory, no doubt by the payment of a large sum. Thus did the Pope, in spite of Emperor or Exarch, by his own tact and skill secure for Italy a great material success.

This phase of Gregory's public life has been, I think, misunderstood by some of his recent biographers. They speak of his continually enlarging the power of the Pope by acting *ultra vires*. We can find no complaint of this among his contemporaries, except in the single instance of his making peace with the Lombard Duke of Spoleto without the knowledge or concurrence of the Emperor. The fact is, Gregory was neither an ordinary Pope nor an ordinary ecclesiastic. He had filled one of the most dignified offices which the Emperor had in his gift, that of Præfect. He had been a man of great wealth, he had been an ambassador at Constantinople for many years, and he had as manager of the Papal Patrimony shown what a great man of affairs he was. No wonder that in these terrible times, when Italy was broken up into a patchwork of communities, and those belonging to the Emperor were often far away and difficult to administer, the services of the great Pope should have been gladly welcomed in supplementing the secular resources of the Crown by being permitted to make appointments and to conduct the local administration which in other times and under other conditions would have been hardly possible.

It was thus he was able to appoint Leontius as military governor of a town in Etruria which was

in a particularly forlorn condition, namely, Narnia, 30 miles from Rome.[1] More especially, however, were his services needed in the south (which was so far from Ravenna), and, having heard that Arichis, the Duke of Beneventum, was contemplating an attack on Naples, he did not hesitate to nominate a Tribune named Constantius to take command of the city and to order the garrison to obey him (*uti praedicto magnifico viro tribuno; sicut et fecistis, omnem debeatis pro serenissimorum dominorum utilitate vel conservanda civitate obedientiam exhibere*).[2]

While we approve and admire the Pope's energy and administrative skill, we must not disguise the risks he had run in the process, nor that in his anxiety to save Rome he had left the Italian dominions of the Emperor in a perilous position by conceding to the Lombards the possession of the key of the whole position at Perugia. No wonder the Emperor wrote him stinging letters, in which he spoke of his simplicity and artlessness in the presence of the artful astuteness of the Lombards. In his reply, which was assuredly a form of letter seldom written to and still less seldom tolerated by an Emperor, the Pope does not spare his phrases and speaks with great bitterness, and especially resents the term "*fatuus*" as applied to himself. "*Nam in eis urbano simplicitatis vocabulo me fatuum appellat*," he says. He acknowledges that he had indeed been simple to allow himself to be put in such a situation

[1] *E. and H.* ii. 33, and note 3. [2] *Ib.* ii. 34.

—*quod ita esse ego quoque ipse confiteor.* He goes on to speak of the heroism of another Gregory, namely, the Prætorian præfect, and of Castus, the Magister Militum, or general, in the late struggles, and protests against their having been treated with contumely because the Roman authorities had a grievance against himself.[1]

My friend Mr. Oman has some very sage comments on the wider results of the Pope's intervention in the politics of Italy at this time, with which I quite agree. He says: "The peace made by Agilulf with Gregory was from the political side a huge mistake on Agilulf's part. The Lombards were still slowly advancing, and capturing one by one the remaining Imperial fortresses. They should never have halted till they had carried their kingdom up to its natural boundaries. The treaty of 599 perpetuated the anomaly by which isolated patches of Roman territory in the marsh, the mountains, or the shore were interspersed amongst the duchies of the conquerors."

"A few years later, when the Exarch Gallicinus broke the treaty by kidnapping Agilulf's daughter and carrying her off to Ravenna, Agilulf consented to renew the agreement after tearing away from the Empire two more great towns, Padua and Mantua. He should have pushed on and made an end of the Exarchate when the opportunity was in his hands, for in 603–605 the wretched Phocas was Emperor at Constantinople, and, oppressed with his

[1] *E. and H.* v. 36.

Persian war, could send no succour to his lieutenant in Italy. But Agilulf allowed himself to be easily propitiated, and the Imperial forces remained to serve as thorns in the side of the Lombard monarchy, and to prevent the unification of Italy for more than twelve hundred years. That Rome, Venice, Ravenna, and Naples were never incorporated with the Lombard realm was mainly due to the personal regard which Agilulf and Theodelinda bore to the Roman pontiff. Remote as the cause may seem, it was undoubtedly the source of half the political and religious complications of the Middle Ages. The Papal Peace, as it has been called, of 599 was the origin of the temporal sovereignity of the Bishop of Rome in the *Ducatus Romanus*. . . . If Agilulf had pressed the siege of the city in 593, Rome would have become a provincial town of the Lombard realm, or at the best its capital. . . . The Lombard sealed thereby the ultimate ruin of his own people."[1]

Speaking of the gains to Italy of the otherwise wise policy of Agilulf and his wife, Oman says: "The first monuments of the Lombards date back to Agilulf. The sacristy of the basilica which he and his wife built in honour of St. John the Baptist at Monza, hard by Milan, still contains many curious relics of the pious pair. The crown which he dedicated, and which Paul the Deacon noted two hundred years after, is gone, but there still survives his large pectoral cross and a quantity of Theodelinda's gifts, the most notable of which is an

[1] Mason's *Mission of Augustine*, Dissertation i. pp. 170, 171.

extraordinary life-sized hen and chickens in silver. There is no similar treasure of the seventh century extant anywhere."[1]

Let us now return again to our immediate subject. It was a sad fact that Maurice the Emperor and Gregory the Pope got on so badly together. Maurice was one of the best of the Byzantine rulers, a fine soldier and a gentleman, and he has unjustly been visited with many hard words by Gregory, whose exacting, sarcastic, and patronising phrases, it must be said, he bore with great patience. If Justinian had been in his place the great Pope's career would certainly have been cut short at an early stage, and he would have been exiled or treated with contumely. It was not the Emperor's fault that the Persians and Avars needed so much of his attention and were so troublesome in his reign, and that at all hazards he was obliged to protect his eastern dominions, whatever became of Italy. If the Exarchs did little to help, they had little means at their command. Yet it was partly their tactlessness in dealing with the Lombards which brought so many troubles on the country, and it was perhaps also the feeling among some of them that what Belisarius and Narses had done they might possibly do again.

One incident is worth reporting where the two great men worked amicably together. Things were very bad at Rome in the spring of 595. There was a shortage of corn and a famine seemed impending. Maurice thereupon sent a sum of thirty pounds of

[1] Mason's *Mission of Augustine*, Dissertation i. p. 172.

gold to relieve the needy priests and other persons, and a considerable sum to pay the overdue wages of the soldiers, which was distributed under the surveillance of Castus the general. By this means a threatened mutiny was avoided. The Pope in his reply says that what could be spared from relieving the blind, maimed, and feeble had been divided among a large number of poor women who had fled to the city from the provinces, and who had been placed in nunneries where there was room for them, while others were in great destitution.

It was a very fortunate thing that in these times the papal treasury was itself well filled, and that it was possible out of it to do something to mitigate the pressure of the Lombard arms by ransoming prisoners, etc; for this purpose the Pope even allowed churches to sell their plate. Still larger payments could also be made out of these rich resources betimes. Thus when the Pope made a pact with the Lombards in 593, without the concurrence of the Emperor or the Exarch, and secured their withdrawal, we can hardly doubt that it involved the payment of a large sum of money which he had to find. It was doubtless this money rather than the prayers and gravity of the Pope, as reported by the "Continuator of Prosper," that influenced the Lombard to withdraw. He tells us that the colloquy between the Pope and the Lombard King which led to the withdrawal of the latter took place on the steps of the basilica of St. Peter's.[1]

This was not the only peaceable victory gained

[1] See Prosper. Cont. Havn. ap. M.G. *SS. antiq.* ix. 339; Dudden, ii. 23.

by Gregory over the Lombards. With the assistance of the Princess Theodelinda and by the zeal of the Italian bishops they were presently converted from Arianism to orthodoxy, and thus (apart from the merits of the controversy) they were drawn closer to the old Italian people whom they had sometimes so mercilessly abused.

The work of converting the Lombards, we are told, was expedited by one of Gregory's most famous books, which he wrote at the instance of his friend and protegé the Deacon Peter, and which he dedicated to Theodelinda. This book is known as his *Dialogues*, and consists of lives of the various famous monks and pious men who had lived in Italy. It is full of miracles and marvels with homiletic applications. It is written in four books. This famous work was translated into Anglo-Saxon by Bishop Werfurth in the reign of Alfred the Great.

Having converted the Lombard Arians, Gregory proceeded to reconsecrate certain Arian churches, which had remained closed and deserted since the expulsion of the Goths, after which no Arian services had been permitted in Rome. One of these, situated in the Suburra, had been built and decorated by the Gothic King Ricimer, and his body had been buried there. It was rededicated to St. Agatha of Catania, a Sicilian saint. Another, near the Merulan Palace in the third region, was rededicated to St. Severinus of Noricum, some of whose relics Gregory ordered to be forwarded to Rome and placed in it.[1]

[1] *E. and H.* iii. 19 and iv. 19; and *Dial.* iii. 30.

Having thus succeeded in more or less staunching the wounds which the Lombards had made in the Italian community, Gregory next faced a greater evil still, and the one which was really sapping the Empire of its life-blood, namely, the exactions and cruelties of the Exarchs, the provincial governors, and the tax-collectors. It must have been a galling thing for him to receive the rapacious Exarch Romanus in his basilica of the Lateran at Rome (when he went there to receive the taxes after he had recovered the Perugian country, while a crowd attended him with banners flying); and to have to confess that he was only the vicar of his earthly master. Gregory was, of course, in temporal matters the subject of the Emperor, and theoretically had spiritual jurisdiction only. Writing to one of his friends, he says: "How can the affairs of Italy prosper under a prince (*i.e.* the Exarch) who traffics in the offices of State, who only listens to evil counsels, who only appoints corrupt ministers, and who sucks the very blood of the people?" Again, he says: "The malice of Romanus is worse than the sword of the Lombards. We would rather meet open enemies who kill us, than these State officials who consume us with their rapine and fraud."

On another side, the Exarch of Africa, on whom Sardinia was dependent, sold to the pagan peasants in that island the permission to sacrifice to their idols, and continued to charge them for the privilege after they had been converted by the efforts of Gregory. When reproved by the Bishop of Cagliari, he replied

that, having undertaken to pay a large sum for his post, he could not otherwise discharge the obligation. In Corsica the poor people were reduced to selling their children in order to raise money to pay their dues, whereon many fled to the Lombards, who treated them more tenderly. In Sicily we read of the ill deeds of another exacting tax-collector named Stephen.

Besides his grievances against the rapacious officials, Gregory also had some personal differences with the Emperor, in which he resented what he deemed the latter's interference in spiritual matters. Thus there having been an election of a Bishop at Salona in Dalmatia, two candidates were selected; one was supported by Maurice and his Exarch, and the other by the Pope. Although the Emperor eventually had his way, the discussion caused great soreness and harass, and evidently from his letters it rankled in the Pope's mind, who felt it was not a personal matter he was fighting for, but one which has occupied many soiled pages of history, namely, the question of what rightly belongs to Cæsar and what belongs to God.

Another discussion between the two great men was carried on in a more friendly way. It referred to a serious matter in which there was really no common ground between the disputants. The *afflatus* which was seizing everybody at this time for escaping from the worries and the toils of life by retiring from the world, was seriously affecting the civil service and the army, just as the conversion of

the Mongols to Buddhism destroyed their martial spirit and converted a large part of their then active manhood into monks. The Imperial authorities had to face this difficulty, and we find Maurice propounding a new law by which, in the first place, he forbade public functionaries from holding ecclesiastical preferment; and secondly, forbade soldiers still on service and veterans with unexpired obligations becoming monks or clerics. The worldly wisdom of this enactment is obvious, but it was not reasonable to expect an enthusiastic champion of monasteries whose kingdom was in another world, and who had himself sacrificed this world with great personal loss, to approve of this (however otherwise) sensible policy. Gregory appealed to the Emperor in fervid terms against the new law. His letter on this occasion is a model of good taste and skilful pleading. "The man," he says, "who fails to speak sincerely to the Serene Emperors (*i.e.* Maurice and his son Theodosius) is responsible towards God. I am speaking not as a Bishop nor as a subject of the State, but in regard to an individual right (*jure privato*). For, Serene Lords, you were my masters before you became masters of all. . . . I confess to *my masters* (*dominis meis*) that this law has filled me with terror, for it closes the way to heaven to many. There are many who can lead a Christian life in the world. But there are many who cannot be saved but by forsaking all things: I who thus speak to my masters, what am I but dust and a worm? . . . This power over the human race has

been given to 'my masters,' that they may help those who would do well, to open up the way to heaven and make the earthly kingdom serve the heavenly. Yet here it is forbidden one who has entered the terrestrial army to pass, unless when an invalid or in retirement, into the service of our Lord. It is thus Christ answers by me, the least of his servants and yours: I have raised you from a secretary to be a Count of the Guards, from a Count to be a Cæsar, from Cæsar to be an Emperor, and if that was not enough I have made you father of an Emperor. I have put my priests under your power, and you now withdraw your soldiers from my service. . . . Perhaps it is supposed that none of these men are truly converted; but I, your unworthy servant, have known many soldiers converted in my lifetime who have in the monasteries given an example of every virtue and have even worked miracles. Yet this law interdicts every similar conversion. Inquire, I beseech you, what Emperor it was who made a similar law" (*i.e.* Julian the Philosopher, or, as the Christian apologists named him, the Apostate), "and see whether it becomes you to imitate him, . . . I conjure you by the terrible judge . . . to soften or abrogate this law, for the army of my masters shall increase so much the more against the army of the enemy, as the army of God shall increase in prayer. In submission, however, to your command, I have forwarded this same law into different provinces."[1]

[1] *E. and H.* iii. 6; Barmby, *Ep. Gr.* iii. 67. Comp. Montalembert, *History of the Monks in the West*, 1st ed. ii. 110, 111.

Maurice must have been affected by this letter, for he presently modified the decree, merely insisting on men satisfying their state obligations before joining monasteries, while soldiers should not become monks until after three years' noviciate. This was the length of noviciate fixed by Justinian for all monks, but was reduced by Gregory to two years, in all cases except those of soldiers. The most serious dispute between the two great men, however, arose out of the growing pretensions of the Patriarch of Constantinople, John, styled Jejunator, or the Faster, who became Bishop of Constantinople on April 11, 582. At the Council of Constantinople, held in 381, the Bishop of Constantinople had been given honorary rank next after the Bishop of Rome, on the political ground that Constantinople was treated as New Rome and was the imperial capital. By the 28th Canon of the Council of Chalcedon (451), patriarchal jurisdiction had been given to this Eastern patriarch over the Metropolitans of the Pontic Asian, and Thracian dioceses. Pope Leo protested against this at the time.

The question of his actual status was now complicated by another matter, in which Gregory fought very strenuously but apparently with scant sympathy from the great mass of the Episcopate. Dioscorus of Alexandria had been given the title of Œcumenical. It had been applied to Pope Leo the First in some documents read at the Council of Chalcedon, and had also been used by some of their

Eastern correspondents to Popes Hormisdas, Agapetus, and Boniface the Second.

Justinian had also given to the Bishops of his capital the style of Œcumenical, to which John the Cappadocian (517–520), at the Council of Constantinople in 518, and Mennas (536–552) set up claims, but they had not apparently hitherto presumed to adopt it. John, named the Faster from his austerities, who greatly exalted the position, was no sooner installed than he took the above-named title. Pope Pelagius protested against it, and threatened to excommunicate him for thus infringing on the privileges of other Bishops. In 587 John summoned a Council at Constantinople *in his own name* as the Œcumenical or Universal Patriarch. Certain acts of that Council were, on this ground, repudiated by Pope Pelagius the Second, while he forbade the Archdeacon Laurentius, who succeeded Gregory as apocrisiarius at Constantinople, to assist John in administering the mass. The pretension was indeed an extravagant one, for the See was not even an ancient Apostolic See (*sedes apostolica*). But it must be remembered that the complaint against its use at this time was not that it was new, but that it was the first time that a Bishop had unreservedly applied it to himself, and Gregory no doubt felt that it was meant as a distinct assertion of superiority on the part of the Bishop of New Rome over the Bishop of Old Rome, which with his views he could not endure.

While Gregory, as we have seen, styled John a

Patriarch in the synodical letter issued at his own accession, he sent protests to him in regard to his usurpation which had continued, and also bidding the apocrisiarius Sabinianus (whom he styles a Deacon) to abstain from saying mass with him until he withdrew the claim, and in a sharp letter written to John he protests against his setting himself up above other Bishops. "Peter himself," he says, "a member of the Universal Church, Paul, Andrew, John, what were they but heads of particular communities, and yet all were members under one Lord." In a paragraph lower down he reminds him that the Fathers at the Council of Chalcedon had offered the objectionable title to the prelates of his own Apostolical See of Rome, but they had never used the title, nor wished to do so, for fear it might have been thought they had denied it to all their brethren.[1] This statement about the Council of Chalcedon, which is repeated by Gregory in other letters, was based on a sophistication in the Latin copies of the Acts of that Council, and does not occur in the Greek originals, in which the Pope like the other Patriarchs is called *οἰκουμενικὸς ἀρχιεπίσκοπος*.[2] The passage, nevertheless, shows that Gregory claimed no such proud title for himself. He also wrote letters to the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, bidding them join him in the protest, and described the claim John had made in using the offensive title as an infringement of their rights and dignity as well as his own,

[1] *E. and H.* v. 44.

[2] Giesler, *Ecc. Hist.* 2nd period, 1st div. ch. iii. § 94, note 72; and Barmby, *Letters of Gregory*, v. 18, note 5.

and he rather artfully reminded them that the Sees both of Antioch and Alexandria shared with that of Rome the prerogative of being more or less the children of St. Peter. That of Alexandria had been founded by St. Mark, St. Peter's disciple, while, according to common opinion, Antioch had been St. Peter's See before he became Bishop of Rome, so each one of these Sees really represented the See of the Apostles, and they had the Prince of the Apostles in common.[1]

Again, in writing to Eulogius, the Patriarch of Alexandria, he says: "As it is known to all that the holy Evangelist Mark was sent by his master Saint Peter to Alexandria, it binds us both together in the unity of the master and his disciple, so that I seem to preside over the See of the disciple because of the master and you over the See of the master on account of the disciple, *ut et ego sedi discipuli praesidere videar propter magistrum et vos sedi magistri propter discipulum.*[2]

Lastly, in another letter written to the same bishop he says: "Wherefore there were many apostles, but with regard to the principality itself the See of the Prince of the Apostles alone has grown strong in authority, 'which in three places is the See of one.' For he himself exalted the See in which he deigned to rest and end the present life. He adored the See to which he sent his disciple as Evangelist (*i.e.* Alexandria). He himself estab-

[1] Letter to Anastasius, Patriarch of Antioch, *E. and H.* v. 39.
[2] *E. and H.* vi. 58.

lished the See in which, though he was afterwards to leave it, he sat for seven years (*i.e.* Antioch). Surely, then, it is the See of one, and it is one See over which by divine authority three bishops now preside. Whatever good I hear of you, this I impute to myself. If you believe anything good of me, impute this to your merits, since we are one in Him who says, 'That they all may be one; as thou art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us'" (John xvii. 21).[1] This elaborate argument of the Pope is forgotten by those who claim for Rome alone the privilege of being Peter's See.

John was meanwhile supported by the Emperor (in spite of Gregory's warm protest bidding him disallow the title and, if necessary, coerce the Patriarch to obey); and by some of the Eastern bishops, notwithstanding that the title was such an encroachment on the rights of the Eastern patriarchs both of Antioch and Alexandria. Gregory, alluding to the surname of Faster, writes sarcastically; "Our bones are dried up with fasting and our spirit is full of pride, we have a proud heart under these miserable garments. Lying down on ashes we aspire to greatness." Meanwhile, he adopted for himself the title of "Servant of the servants of God" (*servus servorum Dei*). This title had also been used of himself by St. Augustine, *Ep. ad Vitalem*, by Pope Damasus, *Ep. IV. ad Stephanum et Africae Episcopos*,[2] and it has been adopted by all popes since Gregory, and

[1] *E. and H.* vii. 37; Barmby, vii. 40.

[2] See Barmby, *Epistles of St. Gregory*, bk. i. 1, note.

among them by some very proud Popes, on whom this badge of humility does not sit easily. As we have seen, Gregory would not accept the title of Universal Bishop, or Pope, which was offered to him by the Patriarch of Alexandria. To the latter he wrote: "I want to increase in virtue and not in words, nor do I deem that to be an honour to myself which sacrifices that of my brethren. My honour is the honour of the Universal Church. My honour is the established strength of my brethren. I feel myself truly honoured only when each one who deserves the honour is not denied it. Away with these words which inflate vanity and wound charity."

Notwithstanding the pressure of many influential people, the Patriarch, who was supported by Maurice, refused to give way, and the title to which Gregory objected is still used by the patriarchs of Constantinople. John the Faster died in 595 very poor, having spent all his means in almsgiving, and when an inventory of his goods was taken, there were only found a wooden trestle, a woollen tunic and a worn mantle. The Emperor had these relics removed to the palace, and at Easter he himself slept on the little bed. Notwithstanding the controversy, Gregory, after his death, gave him the title of "Very Pious," and the Greeks have counted him among the saints. Cyriacus, his successor, continued to be friendly with Gregory without giving up the style of Universal (Œcumenical).

We now reach a famous turning-point in the world's history. The Emperor Maurice had reigned

for twenty years, and had shown many of the qualities of a great prince, and had it not been that he was continually hampered by having to meet a very powerful set of external enemies who made great drains on the resources of the Empire, he might have been classed among the more fortunate of rulers. "In 591 he had brought to a successful close the long Persian war which had been for nineteen years draining the resources of the East. A fortunate change of governors in Persia had enabled him to make a creditable peace, by which he won back not only the lost fortresses of the frontier, but a new province, the district of Persarmenia."[1] The inevitable wars with the Persians, the Avars, and Slavs, especially the last two, were especially costly, for the enemy had to be continually appeased by the payment of large sums of money, and the armies were continually in a state of feverish and not very glorious campaigning. These payments had to be dragged out of an impoverished country, and necessitated economies which were ill understood and appreciated, and the Emperor acquired the reputation of being mean and grasping, and especially did his economies cause discontent among the not too well or regularly paid soldiery, with whom he became increasingly unpopular, nor did his policy towards them in his later life savour much of tact. Thus, for some unexplained reason, perhaps because the enemy had demanded an altogether exorbitant payment, he in 599 refused to ransom 12,000 of his men who had been made

[1] Oman, *op. cit.* 173.

prisoners by the Avars, who thereupon mercilessly slew them. The tragedy earned for the Emperor the dangerous names of Miser and Murderer. Two years later, he ordered the army which was guarding the Balkan provinces to winter in the land of the Slavs beyond the Danube, in order to save supplies. This led to a mutiny; the soldiers refused to cross the river, and, placing a centurion named Phocas on a shield, they gave him the title of Exarch and marched towards the capital.

Phocas stands out in history among the greatest monsters who have ruled over men, illiterate, drunken, sensual, passionate, and cruel. His very personal appearance—his diminutive and deformed person, the closeness of his shaggy eyebrows, his red hair, his beardless chin, and his cheek disfigured and discoloured by a formidable scar, which grew black when he was in a rage, are spoken of as fit emblems of his low and savage nature.[1]

He presently reached Constantinople, whence Maurice, who had no adequate force to oppose him, fled to Chalcedon. He refused to offer a hopeless resistance, and was put to death, as were his five sons, together with Constantine the Patrician and George the chief Notary.[2] Their bodies were thrown into the sea, and their heads were exposed in the city, and then buried. This was in November 602. This terrible tragedy would hardly occupy these paragraphs but for the conduct of Gregory in the matter,

[1] Barmby, *Gregory the Great*, p. 131.
[2] Gibbon, v. 45; *E. and H.* xiii. 1.

which was quite intolerable, and is a fair measure of what the best of men will do when acting under ungoverned exasperation. The Patriarch of Constantinople was a devoted friend of Maurice, who had always sustained the claims of his See, and he did his best to protect the Imperial family, especially the ladies of the household of Maurice, from the cruelties inflicted on them. This was greatly resented by Phocas, who accordingly extended a very friendly hand to the Patriarch of the West, and he made ample professions of devotion both to the Pope and to the Church.

These civilities were soothing to the Pope, even when offered by such an evil-doer. The announcement of the coronation of Phocas and his wife, Leontia, did not reach Rome till the kalends of May 603, when messengers also arrived bearing the images (*icona*) of the two sovereigns crowned with laurel. They were taken to the great hall in the Lateran Palace called the Basilica Julii, where they were acclaimed by all the clergy and the senate in the words, *Exaudi Christe! Focae Augusto et Leontiae Augustae vita.* ("Hear, O Christ. Long life to Phocas the Emperor and the Empress Leontia.") "Then," continues the story (which, according to Ewald and Hartmann, was derived from some probably official Annals), "the most holy and apostolical Pope Gregory ordered the images to be placed in the oratory or chapel of St. Cesarius, which was situated in the Imperial palace on the Palatine."[1]

[1] *E. and H.* xiii. 1.

All this has a grim and unpleasant sound, but it was not all.

Gregory had received many kindnesses from Maurice, and he ought to have respected the decencies of life rather better than to exult as he did when he heard of his death. No doubt he was very sore at Maurice's countenance of the pretensions of John the Faster to use the title of Universal Bishop. He had also resented Maurice's attitude on the controversy about the three chapters; and perhaps also the hapless policy of the Exarch and his master towards the Lombards. Above all, probably what rankled in his mind was the epithet applied to him by Maurice, when, without the consent of the Emperor, he had made a compromising peace with the Lombards and had been styled a "simpleton" for his pains. Anyhow it is plain that he came to bitterly dislike Maurice. This is quite true, and perhaps not entirely unjustified; but that he should have addressed his murderer, and the murderer of so many reputable persons, in the terms of flattery contained in his congratulatory letters is intolerable and shocking, for he could hardly plead ignorance of what was taking place at Constantinople, and of the manner of man he was who was now at the helm. His ties with the capital were close, and his correspondents there were numerous. His first letter to Phocas commences with the phrase, "Glory to God in the Highest, who, according as it is written, changes times and transfers kingdoms, . . . sometimes when the merciful God has decreed

THE COLUMN OF PHOCAS IN THE ROMAN FORUM.

To face p. 124.

to refresh the mourning hearts of many with his consolation; he advances one to the summit of government, and through the bowels of his mercy infuses the grace of exultation into the minds of all. . . . We . . . rejoice that the Benignity of your Piety has arrived at Imperial supremacy. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad (Ps. xcv. 11); and let the whole people of the republic, hitherto afflicted exceedingly, grow cheerful for your benignant deeds. Let the proud minds of enemies be subdued under the yoke of your domination," etc. etc. In a second letter to Phocas he begins with the phrase: "It pleases us to consider with rejoicing and great thanksgiving, what praises we owe to Almighty God, and how the yoke of sadness has been removed, and we are come to times of liberty under the Imperial piety of your Benignity"; and it ends with the words, "May the Holy Trinity guard your life, for many years, so that we may the longer rejoice in the good effects of your Piety, which we have received after long waiting."

A third letter written to his equally bloodthirsty wife, the Empress Leontia, begins: "What tongue may suffice to speak, what mind to think, what great thanks we owe to Almighty God, for the serenity of your Empire, in that such hard burdens of long duration have been removed from our necks, and the gentle yoke of Imperial supremacy has returned, which subjects are glad to bear. Glory, then, be given to the Creator of all by the hymning choirs of angels, and thanksgiving be paid by men on earth,

for that the whole republic, which has endured many wounds of sorrow, has at length found the balm of your consolation."[1]

The effusive language of Gregory about Phocas and his wife were no doubt largely due to the well-timed deference of the latter to the Pope. It will not do to say that it was drawn from him, when he, perhaps, hardly knew the real character of the tyrant. As late as February 601, two years before his own death, Gregory writes to the Patriarch of Jerusalem: "Let thanks be given without ceasing to Almighty God, and let prayers be made for our most pious and Christian Emperor, and for his most tranquil spouse, and his most noble offspring, in whose time the mouths of heretics are closed." This last clause perhaps explains a good deal.

Let us now sum up shortly what Gregory had been able to do as a politician and a statesman in the first few years of his pontificate. The most important thing of all for the permanent peace of the world, and for the uniting of men in a common feeling of brotherhood, was the conversion of the Arians of Italy. Whatever the merits of the controversy between them and the orthodox party, there can be no doubt that the existence and continuance of the schism at this time was a source of continual danger and menace to the Western world, and divided men by the most trying and irritating of solvents, namely, a feud involving heretical charges, when a heretic was deemed a criminal and

[1] *E. and H.* xiii. 34, 41, 42; Barmby, xiv. 31, 38, 39.

worse than a pagan. The bringing of Italy again into close relation with Gaul and Spain, by uniting them into one common Christian fold, even if only nominally in some cases, was a stupendous gain to the world, when there was little or no moral restraint anywhere except that imposed by the Church, and when every man's hand, or, rather, every tribe's weapons were directed against its neighbours.

This change led further, no doubt, to the great enlargement of the Pope's prestige and authority. As Patriarch of the West, his became the supreme Court of Appeal in matters of morals and discipline. As he lived in Rome he was surrounded by men trained as lawyers, and holding the traditions of the ancient Roman courts in their hands. No one cared to dispute his appellate jurisdiction. Bishops, priests, and laymen gladly accepted the Pope as their common arbiter, adviser, and friend, and more especially so now, when he had done so much to piece together the riven garment. His own high character, gifts, and administrative powers made him still more popular. The paragraphs which Gregory of Tours (who was born about the same time, and who died before the Pope), devotes to him, prove what a personality as well as a Pope he was felt to be, and this is even more obvious to any one who will read his correspondence.

We must not push this theory too far, however, nor suppose that at this time the Pope's authority in spiritual matters was what it became when the individual initiative and influence of each bishop

was swamped by that of the great Roman Metropolitan. In an earlier chapter I have brought together (so far as I know) all the passages in which Gregory states his view as to the real extent of the Papal Primacy, and they show how completely he repudiated the style of Œcumenical Patriarch, which he describes as "a wicked and blasphemous title."[1] Nothing could be in greater contrast to the pretensions of later Popes. In this behalf let me quote a passage from Dr. Friedrich's great work: "Cardinal Lucca says[2] it is the '*opinio in hac Curia recepta*' that the Pope is *Ordinarius Ordinariorum, habens Universum mundum pro dioecesi*, so that bishops and archbishops are only his '*officiales*,' or, as Benedict XIV. observes,[3] the Pope is '*in tota Ecclesia, proprius sacerdos; potest ab omni jurisdictione episcopi subtrahere quamlibet Ecclesiam.*'" In *Merlinis Decis. Rot. Rom.*, ed. 1660 (Dec. 880) we read: "*Papa est dominus omnium beneficiarum.*"[4] Nothing of this extraordinary claim, which makes the Pope the concurrent ordinary in every diocese, and reduces the bishops to the position of mere vicars of the Pope, is to be found in any of Gregory's voluminous writings, in which, on the contrary, he disclaims and repudiates it in language of studied scorn. He may have been wrong and the later Popes may have been right, but they cannot both be right, and inasmuch as all Popes have been pronounced

[1] *E. and H.* v. 18; viii. 30. [2] *Relat. Curiae. Rom. Diss.* iv. 10.
[3] *De Synod. Dioces.* x. 14; v. 7. [4] Janus, 422, note.

infallible, in this issue we have a logical knot which no casuist, however subtle, has been able to disentangle. Still the Pope's power was greatly enhanced by Gregory, and not merely in spiritual matters. In Italy his recent successes as a diplomatist, and the relief they gave to the community, must have greatly increased the papal power, not merely in religious matters, but in civil ones too. He was the first Pope who negotiated treaties independently of the Emperor, and who presumed to act in dealing with other communities as if he had a secular status of his own as well as a spiritual one. The great possessions of the Holy See in Italy, Sicily, and elsewhere made him virtually a Prince of this world, and when the representatives of the Eastern Empire were limp and lax and allowed the reins to slip, and chaos to come in view, it was natural that the Italians should have clung to the one institution which was well administered, and to the one authority wielded with wisdom, equity, and force.

CHAPTER V

In the previous pages I have almost entirely limited myself to Gregory's doings in the lands south of the Alps. I now propose to describe his work to the north of those mountains in Spain and Gaul, and shall have to enter into some detail in view of the ultimate goal of my work.

In the time of Gregory a small portion of the maritime border of Southern Spain, with its capital at Corduba (Cordova), still remained, as we have seen, subject to the Empire. The rest of the peninsula was held by the Visigoths. In addition to their possessions in Spain, the Visigothic kings also ruled a portion of what is familiarly known as Gaul or France, which the Franks had not been able to take from them, namely, the country south of the Garonne, known as the land of Narbonne, or Septimania, which was also called Gothia for a long time after.

The Arian form of Christianity was held by the ruling family among the Visigoths and the greater part of the aristocracy of the country who were of Visigothic blood. On the other hand, the descendants of the old Roman population, who formed a considerable proportion of the people, were ortho-

dox Catholics, as were the Suevians, a German tribe which had kept up its independence behind the northern mountains, and which had recently been subjected by the Visigoths.

The great King Leovigild (568–589), who did so much to consolidate the Visigothic power, was chiefly thwarted in that work by the fact just named which united the Byzantines in the south, the Suevi in Gallicia and Lusitania, and a large proportion of the Romanised peasants in other parts of Spain.

His son Hermenigild in 579 married Ingunthis, the daughter of Sigebert, King of Austrasia, and of his wife Brunichildis. Although she was then only thirteen years old, she could not be persuaded to abandon her religion. Leovigild assigned the Province of Baetica as an appanage to the married pair. Hermenigild fixed his capital at Seville, where the famous orthodox archbishop, Leander, the friend of Gregory, had his see.

Under the joint influence of his wife and of Leander, Hermenigild was himself converted to orthodoxy and given the name of John.[1] His conversion may have been further influenced by the ambition of trying to oust his father from the throne. It is certain that when he presently rebelled he was supported by the orthodox party in various parts of Spain.

In view of this revolt his father now made certain

[1] Gregory of Tours, v. 39; St. Gregory's *Dialogues*, iii. 31; Paul the Deacon, iii. 21.

concessions to the orthodox. Although a heretic, he went to pray in Catholic churches, and under his influence the Arian synod at Toledo decreed that "it is not necessary for those who come to *our Catholic faith from the Roman religion*" (a notable phrase) "to be rebaptized, but they are to be purified merely by imposition of hands and reception of the communion, and are to give thanks *to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Ghost.*" By this concession—by bribery and other promises—he secured the adhesion of a number of the Catholic clergy to the Royal creed.[1] Two years later he attacked Hermenigild, drove him from Baetica, and compelled him to fly to Corduba, then the seat of power of the Byzantine possessions in Southern Spain, which was surrendered to Leovigild by its Byzantine commander, the Præfect Comitiolus, for a bribe.

Hermenigild was then exiled to Valencia, and, having apparently tried to escape to the Franks, he was presently put to death at Tarragona in 585. Gregory of Tours suggests that this was at the instance of Leovigild. The Spanish writers, John of Biclaro and Isidore of Seville, as well as the neutral chronicler, Gregory of Tours, all describe Hermenigild as a mere rebel and tyrant, and make no pretence that he was a martyr to his faith.[2]

Gregory the Pope, on the other hand, had doubtless been influenced by his friend Leander and the other Spaniards whom he had met at

[1] Joh. Bicl. *Chron. ad. an.* 580; Dudden, i. 405.
[2] *Ib.* 406.

Constantinople, where they had gone to further the cause of the young prince. He tells a quite fantastic story about Hermenigild having been killed in a brutal manner by his father after he had been in vain pressed to abandon his orthodoxy, and reports that after his death the sounds of psalmody were heard around his body, while lighted lamps were seen. This seems to be an unhistorical fabrication imposed upon the too credulous Pope, who was always willing to believe what he was told to the credit of orthodoxy. "A close examination of all the sources," says Professor F. Görres, "has led me to the conclusion that the supposed martyrdom of Hermenigild cannot be substantiated." Mr. Dudden, after quoting this phrase, continues: "But the Roman Church has preferred the Gregorian account to that of the Spanish historians, who were alone qualified to relate the facts. By a brief of Sixtus the Fifth in 1585, the cult of St. Hermenigild was instituted in Spain; Urban the Eighth made it general throughout the Roman Church."[1]

In 589 Leovigild was succeeded by his second son Reccared. He was probably largely induced to change his faith by political considerations and by a desire to get into closer relations with the Byzantine Emperor, whose prestige still exercised great fascination in the West, and with whom the great orthodox bishops, Leander of Seville and Licinianus of Cartagena, had much influence. Only a few months after

[1] Dudden, i. 407.

his accession he summoned a synod at Toledo, at which he abjured Arianism and induced many bishops and nobles to do the same. The king's change of faith was not everywhere accepted, and the Arians broke out into revolt in several places. These disturbances were soon suppressed, and in May 589 a great council was held at Toledo, attended by Reccared and his queen, by the principal Visigothic nobles and courtiers, by sixty-two bishops, and a large number of the inferior clergy. At this synod Reccared made a great speech, probably composed by Archbishop Leander, who regulated the proceedings of the Council with the Abbot Eutropius. Leander was a remarkable personage. Like Gregory, he was of noble birth. He was a theologian and a strong opponent of Arianism. He wrote homilies on the Psalms, composed music, was a student of ritual, a great devotee of Monachism, and wrote excellent letters.

In his address to the synod, King Reccared declared that he had been inspired by God to restore the Goths to the orthodox fold, and asked the bishops to aid him in the work. He then denounced Arianism, gave his adherence to the four general councils and all other councils which agreed with them, and recited the creeds of Nicæa and Constantinople and the definition of Chalcedon. It is notable that nothing is said about the so-called Athanasian creed, which is nearly conclusive that it was not then in existence, for on no occasion would its recital have been more appropriate than at this

great repudiation of Arianism. After he had finished, the clergy and nobles who had been converted from Arianism professed the orthodox faith, denounced Arianism in twenty-three anathemas, and repeated the creeds, etc., as their master had done. These were subscribed by eight Arian bishops and their clergy and by the nobles. The synod agreed to certain canons ; *inter alia*, to one providing that the Creed should be recited at the time of Holy Communion, so as to secure that the faithful should be perfectly acquainted with the articles of their belief. After this, Leander preached a fine sermon, apostrophising the work they had done "in destroying the wall of discord which had separated them" and in securing the union of the Church, with Christ as a corner-stone.[1]

Leander wrote to inform his close friend the Pope about the happy event. His letter took some time to travel, and it was not till the year 591 that it was acknowledged by Gregory, who expressed his great gratification at the news. In this letter he styles Leander Bishop of Hispalensis (now Seville), and he calls the "Glorious King" Reccared, their common son (*communem filium*). He uses a pretty phrase about the king, in which he says: "In describing his character to me in thy letters thou hast made me love him, though I know him not" (*Cujus dum mihi per scripta vestra mores exprimitis, amare me etiam quem nescio fecistis*). One of the clauses of the letter is

[1] Dudden, i. 409.

devoted to some remarks on the "Trine" immersion in baptism practised generally in the Catholic Church, but apparently not among the orthodox in Spain, who, to differentiate themselves from the Arians, who had adopted it, used one immersion only. Gregory approves of Leander's continuing this practice, on the ground that the people, in numbering the immersions, might proceed to divide the Deity, adding that so long as one faith was preserved there was room for diversity of practice.

In the same letter Gregory tells Leander he is sending him a copy of his Pastoral Rule and the first and second parts of his *Moralia*.[1]

Under the year 595 Ewald and Hartmann publish the letter appended to Gregory's book just named, in which he had dedicated the work to his old friend. In the heading he styles Leander Most Reverend and Most Holy and calls him Coepiscopus.[2]

Four years later, and doubtless at the request of Leander, Gregory sent the former the pallium, with permission to use it at Mass. Gams, the historian of the Spanish Church, holds that this also involved the conferring on Leander of the vicariate of the Holy See in Spain, which had been conferred on his predecessors, archbishops of Seville, by Popes Simplicius and Hormisdas,[3] but in such a case we should have expected an express reference to the fact in the Pope's letter. It is

[1] *E. and H.* i. 41. [2] *Ib.* v. 53*a*.
[3] Gams, ii. 2, p. 47 seq.; *E. and H.* ix. 227.

probable, in fact, that the gift of the pallium did not in this case secure any enhanced papal authority in Spain, where Reccared, who had been so recently converted, might easily have resented what he might interpret as an encroachment of a foreign power.

Gregory says very handsome things about the king's abandoning the Arian heresy, a fact which he says had been reported to him by the priest Probinus. He also praises him for having refused a bribe offered by the Jews to tempt him to have an enactment which had been made against them revoked. He further thanks him for the gifts he had sent to St. Peter, and sends him in return some filings from the chains of that Apostle enclosed in a key, with a cross containing a portion of the True Cross, and some hair of John the Baptist, and tells him how he had sent Leander the pallium, according to ancient custom (*pallium a beati Petri apostoli sede transmissimus, quod et antiquae consuetudinis et vestris moribus et ejus bonitati atque gravitati debemus.*)[1]

Reccared's conversion had greatly strengthened his hands. As Oman says: "It took away the great barrier between the Visigoth and the Roman which had hitherto rendered any true loyalty to the Crown impossible; the two nations soon began to coalesce and melt into a single people. It is of no small interest to note that Reccared, first of all the kings of Spain, was able to trust his armies to

[1] *E. and H.* ix. 228.

Roman generals and to count on the enthusiastic support of Roman bishops." He died in 601.

It would seem that Gregory had undertaken to mediate between Reccared and the Byzantine emperor, and in a letter to the king he asks him to send a copy of the pact alleged to have been made in the time of Justinian, with the Gothic king, Athanigild, of which the copy in the Imperial archives was said to have been burnt with many other documents in a fire.[1] In addition to this the Pope suggested to him that the document, if found, might not be in his favour, and that it would be well for him to look for it among his own charters before compromising himself. These letters, it would seem, were sent to Spain by the Abbot Cyriacus.

The only case of which we have any notice in which Gregory claimed any jurisdiction in Spain is referred to in certain letters, whose genuineness is doubtful and which profess to have been written by the Pope in August 603 to John the Deacon, who is described as holding the office of a Defensor there, and who was on his way to Spain. These letters contain instructions how he was to act when he arrived. He is supposed to have gone thither to intervene in a very serious and important issue, in which two bishops, Januarius of Malaga and Stephen (whose see is not named in the documents, but who Hartmann identifies with a bishop of Cartagena), were involved. They had been tried and deposed, according to the Pope, in a cruel and unjust manner

[1] *E. and H.* ix. 229.

by a synod of bishops acting at the instigation of a Roman official, namely, Comitiolus, the præfect of the Byzantine possessions in Spain, who is called a Patrician and *Magister Militum.* The three documents entrusted to John the Defensor are a *Capitolare*, or schedule of instructions in regard to the case to be tried, and the process of investigation; secondly, a collection of Imperial laws against which the opponents of the appealing bishops had offended; and, thirdly, the formula according to which Januarius, if innocent, was to be acquitted.[1] In case they were found to be innocent, the bishops who had tried the two appellants, and consecrated the successor of Januarius, were to be excommunicated, and the latter was to be sent to Rome for punishment, or handed over to Januarius to be dealt with. If the bishops who condemned Januarius pleaded that they had acted under durance their punishment was to be reduced. In regard to Stephen, the defensor John was to see that the accusers and witnesses had been different persons, that the accused had been duly confronted with the witnesses and had had a fair opportunity of defending himself, and to inquire whether the witnesses were slaves, poor men, or men of bad character, or had a grudge against the bishop.[2] The deposition of the bishops had taken place some years before, and it would seem that Comitiolus was dead, but it was to be insisted upon that he or his heirs

[1] *E. and H.* xii. 47, 49, 50; John the Deacon, ii. 11.
[2] Dudden, 413.

should restore the episcopal property if a wrong had been done. What is important to remember is that this appeal to Rome and Gregory's intervention had nothing to do with any jurisdiction in the Visigothic part of the peninsula, and only refers to the maritime district still subject to the Emperor, whose official was the person involved. We have no satisfactory evidence that Gregory ever exercised any patriarchal jurisdiction in any part of Spain directly subject to the Visigoths.

Let us now turn to Gaul. There are few more difficult things than to realise the condition of Gaul at this time. Like "India," which is a most indefinite term, the word "Gaul" represented a heterogeneous collection of communities united by one name, but differing greatly *inter se.*

The so-called barbarians who conquered and occupied it in the fifth century are treated by many as if they were very much alike because they came from beyond the Rhine and spoke German. The fact is, they were exceedingly different in temperament and habits. The Burgundians and Visigoths, like the Lombards, were Christians, although Arians (as were many remarkable men of the time), and readily accepted a good deal of the Roman civilisation, took over the Roman administration, and in a large measure also its laws. Thus it came about that the south of Gaul where they settled soon became prosperous and cultured again, as those words were understood in the sixth century. Provence and the Rhone valley, in

fact, passed through the change of masters with very little break in the continuity of their history.

It was very different in the north and centre of Gaul, where the conquering tribes were much more ruthless and barbarous, and where the destruction of the old civilisation was almost complete. 'There are few more terrible nightmares in history than the conquest and government of Northern and Central Gaul by the Franks under the first dynasty of their long-haired kings, when lust, passion, murderous cruelty, rapine, and degradation spread over a land once so carefully ruled and so prosperous under its Roman masters.'

Chlodowig, generally known as Chlovis, the first great conquering king of the Franks, died in 511, after successively defeating the Alemanni, the Burgundians and Visigoths, and reducing them to pay tribute. He thus became virtually master of Gaul; the only exceptions being Provence and Dauphinè (which formed part of the Empire of Theodoric), the north-western peninsula which is now known as Brittany, and the province of Septimania, south of the Garonne, held by the Visigoths. Provence and Dauphinè were ceded to the Franks by the Ostrogothic king, Witiges, for a payment of £80,000 in the year 536. While the Franks thus became nominally masters of nearly all Southern Gaul, and derived a considerable revenue thence, they apparently interfered little with the administration. The population remained largely Roman in blood, and the land was largely

held by semi-Romanised Burgundians and Visigoths. The real Frank land was North and North Central Gaul.

Chlodowig's dominions were divided among his four sons, of whom Chlothachaire or Chlothaire, survived the rest. In 560, a short time before his death, the latter reunited the Frank empire in his own hands.

His kingdom was again divided among his four sons. Sigebert took Austrasia or Eastern Gaul, including the cities of Rheims and Metz, with a large extension into Germany. With this he also held Provence, and some territory in the borders of Aquitaine and Burgundy, including the city of "Arverni" (? Clermont). Gunthrainn or Guntran took Burgundy. He has been well described as a stupid, lecherous, good-natured man, with many mistresses, the last of whom told him on her death-bed to put her two doctors to death, which he did; but he was kind and generous to his nephews and devoted to the clergy, and is highly praised by their spokesmen. Gregory of Tours says: "You would have thought him a priest of God as well as a king." While Fredegar, another biassed witness, says: "With priests he showed himself as a priest." They further rewarded him by canonising him and attributing miracles to his relics. Assuredly a very queer saint.

Neustria or Normandy, which included the lands between the Loire and the Meuse, and comprised the Netherlands, Picardy, Normandy, and Maine,

and parts of Champagne and Brittany, with his capital at Soissons, was the portion of Chilperic, a vicious, heartless savage, whom Gregory of Tours calls "the Nero and Herod of our time."[1] He murdered his wife and two sons by burning them to death, and blinded many people; and in imitation of the Roman Emperors built amphitheatres at Paris and Soissons, where he showed spectacles. He hated Church dignitaries, and envied their wealth. "Behold," he used to say, "our riches are transferred to the Churches. None reign at all save the bishops. Our dignity is lost and carried over to the bishops of the cities." He used habitually to quash wills made in favour of the Church. The bishops, when passing from Burgundy to Neustria, used to say it was like going from heaven to hell. He persecuted the Jews and crushed his people with taxes.[2] On the other hand, he was the most cultured of his race. He added four new letters to the alphabet, composed prayers and hymns, and wrote two volumes of poetry in imitation of Sedulius, in which "the quantities" were sadly at fault. He also wrote a learned but not very orthodox book on the Trinity,[3] and finally he married the infamous harlot Fredegundis, who had been his mistress.

Lastly, the province of Aquitaine (roughly, the territory between the Loire and the Pyrenees) fell to Charibert, Chlodowig's eldest son, with his capital at Paris.

[1] *Op. cit.* vi. 46. [2] *Ib.* and vi. 22; Dudden, ii. 44.
[3] Gregory of Tours, v. 45.

The Merovingian princes were chiefly dissolute, and died young; thus Charibert died in 567, without male issue, and his portion was shared by his three brothers, with a joint interest in Paris.

The most reputable of them was Sigebert, who married the famous and beautiful Brunichildis or Brunhilda, the daughter of Athanigild, the king of the Spanish Visigoths, who was born an Arian, but became orthodox on her marriage. She was clever and cultured, and a masterful woman, but suffered from her surroundings; and in fighting for power and for her offspring and protégés had few scruples or tenderness.

Sigebert was, no doubt, considerably humanised by the influence of his Visigothic queen, and Metz in their time became a great centre of political and other influence. Brunichildis, as Dr. Bury says, had received a Roman education, and had therefore a leaning towards the Roman Empire, and maintained a friendly intercourse both with the old and the new Rome.[1] Her husband, King Sigebert, was assassinated in 575, probably at the instigation of Fredegundis, leaving an only son, of whom his widow became the guardian and tutor. He was called Childebert, and was proclaimed King of Austrasia by the nobles on the death of his father, being then five years old. During his reign the friendly intercourse between the kings of Austrasia and the Eastern Empire continued. In their correspondence Maurice called him son, while

[1] *Hist. Later Rom. Emp.* ii. 160.

he called Maurice father. I have described how Maurice offered him a bribe of 50,000 gold pieces to invade Italy and attack the Lombards, and thus protect the Imperial possessions there. He made four unsuccessful attempts to do so, in one of which his army was slaughtered, and in another it suffered greatly from pestilence.

In 584 Chilperic, the infamous King of Neustria, was murdered at Chelles, near Paris. His widow, Fredegundis, was the Messalina of the Franks. King Guntran of Burgundy, her brother-in-law, once called her an enemy of God and man.[1] She was one of the most cruel and vicious women recorded in history. On the murder of her husband she fled to the court of Guntran, who had expressed such a mean opinion of her, and offered him the regency of Neustria on behalf of her boy, Chlothaire, who was then three years old, which he accepted.

In 593 Guntran died childless, and his own kingdom of Burgundy passed to his nephew Childebert, King of Austrasia, who was then twenty-three years old, under the terms of the Treaty of Andelot, and he thus got a very notable accession of power. He proceeded to reduce the borders of Neustria very greatly, leaving it only the coast lands of Frisia, Flanders, and Normandy, while all the rest of the Frankish territory was controlled by himself under the tutelage of his strong-willed mother.

Having thus glanced at the secular history

[1] Greg. Tur. ix. 20.

of Gaul at this time, let us turn to the state of the Frankish Church. The Church in Gaul, like the State, had recently passed through serious vicissitudes, and its condition was very different in different parts of the country.

During the fifth and earlier parts of the sixth century the famous monastery of Lerins had formed a focus of light from which learning and religious zeal had permeated the country in various directions, and we can hardly doubt that during the greater part of this period the valley of the Rhone formed the most attractive part of Latin Christendom. Lerins was a kind of episcopal seminary, where many of the saints and scholars and bishops who mark the period were trained. Things had gone gradually worse lately. It had lost some of its pristine glory, and the great scholars it had turned out had shrunk considerably in numbers. This was partly due to the replacement of the tolerant Burgundians and Visigothic Arians by the rude and rough Franks (who were orthodox, but exceedingly ignorant and superstitious) as masters of the country. Later on the conquest of North Italy by the Lombards cut off that peninsula from any but intermittent intercourse with Gaul, and the Gaulish Church became very isolated. Still, as we shall see, there were good men left among the bishops of Southern Gaul, and learning was by no means extinct. What had sadly gone to pieces was the discipline of the clergy. Widespread corruption and simony existed, which became some-

what later appalling, and the need was great for some controlling influence from outside, strong enough to induce or compel the barbarous Frankish kings and their nobles to cease treating the Church as an object of mere worldly advancement, and its prizes as things not to be given to the good and learned, but to be scrambled for by those without any vocation for the priesthood, who, like the lay abbots and lay bishops of a later date in Germany, had lost all shame.

The fact that so large a part of the German tribes who had overrun the Empire were Arians, made the orthodox popes very tender to the ill-doings and truculence of the Franks, which were largely condoned because they also were orthodox. Thus in 581 Pope Pelagius, writing to the Bishop of Auxerre,[1] speaks woefully of the sufferings of Italy, and reminds his correspondent that the Franks were members of the Catholic Church forming one body under one head, and adds that God had in a wonderful manner united their kings to the Roman Empire in the confession of the orthodox faith in order to provide a bulwark for Italy, and especially for the original home of the Catholic faith, Rome. He begged his correspondent to see to it that the Frank kings did not ally themselves with the Church's unspeakable enemies the Lombards, and thus meet condign punishment from heaven with them, when the day of vengeance came to both.

[1] Pelag. ii. Ep. iv.

This tenderness to the Frankish rulers, which was shared by Pope Gregory, led him especially to tolerate the Erastian theories which they cultivated, and their continual interference with the administration of the Church. Meanwhile the most shameful trafficking in livings and sees, and a persistent opposition to reforms, prevailed. The laxity was especially marked in the centre and north of Gaul, and Gregory of Tours has left us a weird picture of the condition of things, all the more weird because he was such an uncompromising champion of his Church.

Professor Bright and Mr. Dudden have condensed a picture of the state of the Church in Gaul at this time, based on a series of examples recorded by him. The clergy were mostly of servile origin (for it was forbidden to ordain a freeman without the king's permission), and they had the peculiar vices of slaves—greed, sensuality, and undue subserviency to the temporal rulers. All intellectual movement was at a standstill. Simony was rife, bishoprics were given away by Court favour, and laymen were ordained to wealthy sees. The bishops had become landed lords and courtiers. They meddled in politics, and were found mixed up in all manner of discreditable intrigues, and even bloodshed. They oppressed their parochial clergy, who, in return, resisted their authority to the utmost, and formed conspiracies against them. Owing principally to the jealousies and dissensions of the rival kingdoms, the power of the metropolitans had declined. Hence the bishops

had, to a great extent, emancipated themselves from all control and rarely met in synod. In the sixth century only fifty-four councils were held in Gaul; in the seventh only twenty. The bishops allied themselves closely with the kings, of whom they became the counsellors and advisers, and whom, in return for certain concessions, they permitted to encroach upon the privileges of the Church. Thus in all that concerned its relation to the State, the Church had lost independence.

The excesses of the clergy, recorded by Gregory of Tours, were astounding. We read of one bishop who was so addicted to wine that he had frequently to be carried by four men from the table, and who was so avaricious that he made no scruple of annexing the estates of his neighbours. When one of his presbyters refused to give up to him some private property, he had him buried alive in a tomb already occupied by a putrefied corpse. He was utterly ignorant of all literature, and paid great court to the Jews. Another prelate used to become so bestially intoxicated that he was unable to stand; a third, on suspicion of fraud, violently assaulted his archdeacon in church on Christmas Day; a fourth set himself to persecute to the death all the friends of his holy predecessor; a fifth used to beat his enemies with his own hands, exclaiming, "Because I have taken Orders, am I therefore to forego my revenge?" An abbot, mixed up in many robberies, assassinations, and other crimes, compelled a poor man to leave his house in order that he might

commit adultery with his wife, and was killed by the outraged husband. A cleric, who was a schoolmaster, endeavoured to corrupt the mother of one of his pupils, and afterwards, on being forgiven by his bishop, conspired with an archdeacon to murder his benefactor. Two bishops rode armed to battle, and killed many with their own hands. They attacked with armed force one of the brethren while he was celebrating the anniversary of his consecration, tore his vestments, killed his attendants, and robbed him of all his plate. Many persons in their own dioceses they murdered.

Queen Fredegundis deputed two clerics to assassinate Childebert—giving them knives with hollow grooves in the blades filled with poison; another cleric she sent to make away with Brunichildis, her rival. A bishop and an archdeacon were accomplices in the murder of Bishop Prætextatus in Rouen Cathedral, while he was "leaning on a form to rest himself" during the Easter service. Though the victim shrieked for help, none of the clergy standing by went to his assistance. Gregory of Tours says that he suppresses some episcopal misdeeds that he knows of, lest he should be thought to speak evil of his brethren. But he tells us quite enough to enable us to gauge the character of the clergy of the Frankish Church. Certainly we meet with some instances of noble and self-denying men, such as Nicetius of Lyons, Germanus of Paris, and good Bishop Salvius, who, "when constrained to accept money, at once made it over to the poor."

But as a whole the Gallican clergy, both high and low, were as brutal and degraded as the abandoned princes and nobles among whom they lived. The Merovingian society was utterly and abominably corrupt, and the history of Gaul at this period presents a record of horrors and crimes unequalled in the annals of any Western nation.[1] A notable instance of the corruption and simony among the clergy is mentioned by Gregory of Tours,[2] where he tells us that a certain Eusebius, in 591, obtained the See of Paris after presenting many gifts (*datis multis muneribus*).[1]

As we have seen, when Gregory was elected Pope, there had arrived at Rome a representative of his namesake the Bishop of Tours. On his return the latter took back with him "a golden, *i.e.* gilded, chair" for use in his church.[3] Dr. Bright tells us that by ancient custom in Gallic churches (long kept up at Orleans) a newly consecrated bishop, on arriving at the city, was placed in a chair and carried on the shoulders of the clergy (*humeris religiosorum*) or nobles (*nobilium*) into his cathedral for enthronement. At Soissons the ritual provided that he was to be so carried by the Count of Soissons and three other lords. He also instances how St. Wilfred at a later date was similarly carried on a golden seat. This reminds us of the "sella gestatoria" of the Popes.[4]

To Arles, the famous Roman city on the Rhone,

[1] Bright, p. 487; Dudden, ii. 53–55. [2] *Hist. Fr.* x. 26.
[3] See the Benedictine Life of Gregory, iii. 3. 8.
[4] See Bright, *op. cit.* 242 and notes.

had been generally, though not universally, conceded the primacy of Gaul. This had arisen from the tradition that it was at Arles, Christianity was first introduced by St. Trophimus, and had thence spread over the country, and also from the fact that Arles was long the home of the Præfect of Gaul.

In Gregory's time the Archbishop of Arles was Vergilius, who well sustained the fame of the See of Hilary and Cæsarius. He was trained at Lerins, where he had been a monk and abbot.[1] He was a scholar, and is said to have built the churches of St. Stephen in the city of Arles, and of St. Saviour and St. Honoratus outside its walls. He was styled Saint, and held the see from 588 to 610.

A not distant neighbour of Vergilius was Theodore, Bishop of Marseilles, who was also styled Saint, and is described by Gregory of Tours as of eminent sanctity. His life was, however, a troubled one, for it coincided with the struggle of Childebert and his uncle Guntran for the possession of Marseilles. He was cruelly persecuted by Guntran, and ill-used by his own clergy, who took the side of the Burgundian king. He held the see from 575 to about 594.[2]

It would seem that Vergilius and Theodore had sent a joint letter to congratulate Gregory on his accession to the Papacy. Gregory's answer is dated in June 591, acknowledges their congratulations, and also mentions that certain Jews from

[1] *Chron. Lerin*, i. 87.

[2] *E. and H.* i. p. 71, note; Smith, *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, iv. 934.

the Roman province who had visited Marseilles on business had complained that in the latter district their co-religionists were being coerced into Baptism, instead of being persuaded. While the Pope praised the good intention at the back of the policy, he urged that the result must be to make those who were converted in this fashion presently return to their old superstitions, and be more obstinate than ever.[1] In April 593 he sent a letter to Dinamius the Patrician, who was the Frankish governor of the province of Marseilles, and who was also the rector or guardian of the patrimony of St. Peter in the Marseilles diocese. The patrimony of the Holy See in Gaul was divided into two portions, situated in the provinces of Marseilles and Arles respectively. In this letter Gregory acknowledges the receipt by the hands of Hilary (probably the notary so-called, mentioned in several letters[2]) of 400 Gallic solidi (*Gallicani solidi*). This sum was apparently collected from the patrimony in the diocese of Marseilles, for, according to Gregory of Tours, Dinamius had been appointed rector of the province of Marseilles by the King of Austrasia.[3] The Gallic solidi here mentioned were lighter than the Byzantine ones in the proportion of 21 to 20¼ *siliquae*.[4]

The Pope sent Dinamius a present of a small

[1] *E. and H.* i. 45. [2] *Ib.* i. 73–75.

[3] *Hist. Fran.* vi. 7. 11, and *Ven. Fort.* Carm. vi. 9. 10; *E. and H.* i. p. 191.

[4] *I.e.* the silver coins so called. See *E. and H. op. cit.* i. p. 191, note 2.

cross containing some filings from the chains which had bound St. Peter, and which he said, if carried about his neck, would keep him from sin for ever (*in perpetuam a peccatis solvant*). In its four arms were also studded portions of the gridiron (*craticula*) on which St. Lawrence was burnt, which he hoped might cause his correspondent's mind to glow with the love of God.[1]

Shortly after this the Patrician Arigius was appointed to the post of Governor of Marseilles, instead of Dinamius, who was apparently displaced by King Childebert. He undertook to look after the papal patrimony there until new arrangements were made.

On April the 5th, 595, the Pope in a letter urges the managers of the papal estates and farms (*conductores massarum sive fundorum*) in Gaul to be discreet in their behaviour, as befitted their position as officers of the Church, and to beware of plundering or ill-using the people. He says that he had arranged to send them a superintendent or controller (*i.e.* Candidus, *vide infra*) whose journey had been hindered by the winter. Pending his arrival he counsels them to obey the Patrician Arigius.[2]

Arles, as we have seen, had been generally conceded the primacy of Gaul, and it had been usual in earlier times for its archbishop to receive the pallium from the Pope. Thus it had been sent to Cæsarius by Pope Symmachus to Auxantius and Aurelianus by Pope Vigilius, and to Sapaudus by

[1] *E. and H.* iii. 33. [2] *Ib.* v. 31.

Pope Pelagius the First,[1] while as early as 417 Pope Zozimus had made Patroclus of Arles his vicar.[2]

We now find Vergilius writing to Rome to ask for the pallium, according to ancient custom, while King Childebert his master supported his claim. It would seem they also asked that Vergilius might be nominated the Apostolic vicar in Childebert's dominions. On August the 12th, 595, the Pope wrote several letters to Gaul. The first was addressed to Vergilius. In it he said that it was well known how the faith in Gaul had spread from Arles, and he then proceeds to grant what the bishop and King Childebert had asked for.

He further speaks of having been informed by several persons that in parts of Gaul and Germany no one attained to Holy Orders without paying for them. He urges the necessity of stopping the scandal, and adds that if a contention should arise on matters of faith or other matters among the bishops, he should lay the matter before an assembly of twelve of them, and if Vergilius should be in need of the judgment of the Apostolic See to strengthen his own, he was to make a special report of the case, so that it might be terminated by a suitable sentence.[3] In another letter, addressed to the bishops of Gaul, he bids them be diligent in attending the general synods summoned by Vergilius, and if any one was unavoidably prevented going to the synod, he was to send a priest or deacon in his place to represent

[1] *E. and H.* i. p. 368, note 2.
[2] See Dudden, ii. 57.
[3] *E. and H.* v. 58.

him, so that the bishop who was absent should be duly informed of what had taken place, and have no excuse for not complying with it. He concludes with another injunction about simony.[1]

A third letter, dated the 15th of August 595, was sent to King Childebert. In this the Pope acknowledges the receipt of his appeal in support of Vergilius, and reminds him that he had sent the latter the pallium, and also constituted him Papal vicar, in his kingdom, *i.e.* in Austrasia, Burgundy, and Aquitaine. He begs him to exercise his power to put down scandals among the priesthood and to stop the appointment of bishops who had not passed through a previous training in Holy Orders. "Those," he urged, "who had been made bishops immediately from being laymen, continued to be laymen in speech and action after consecration; and thus," he effectively says, "one who was never a pupil himself is suddenly, through his rash ambition, made a master to others, though he has never learnt what he has to teach." How could such a one intercede for the sins of others who had never bewailed his own? He illustrates his view by some apt phrases. He says that freshly-built walls were not loaded with beams until they were dry and had had time to settle, for fear that the whole structure might collapse—similarly, timber used in building was dried and seasoned before a weight was put upon it. Again, in the Royal armies only tried men were made into generals, why in

[1] *E. and H.* v. 59.

the spiritual host should those command who had not seen the beginning of warfare? Gregory pressed his correspondent to put down simoniacal promotions to dioceses or cures of souls. He also asks that his own fellow-bishop Vergilius might be permitted to carry out his work as his predecessors had done in the days of Childebert's father, and he bids him do this for the sake of God and the blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles.[1]

On the death of her husband Sigebert, King of Austrasia, his young widow Brunichildis married Merovach, the son of her brother-in-law Chilperic, King of Neustria. The marriage was incestuous according to the law of the Church, and was in other ways an unhappy one for Merovach, who was pursued hither and thither by his enraged father Chilperic, and eventually committed suicide or was made away with by Fredegundis. Presently Brunichildis joined her son, the King of Metz, where her influence became supreme, and where she played the part of a great queen.

In September 595 the Pope wrote her a letter, couched in flattering diplomatic phrases, in which he spoke of her solicitude for the spiritual as well as the worldly welfare of her kingdom, of her Christianity and her love for Peter, the Prince of the Apostles. He commends to her care the priest Candidus, and the small patrimony of the Holy See in her dominions, over which he had appointed him as overseer, with the duty of looking

[1] *E. and H.* v. 60; Dudden, ii. 57, 58.

after it and of recovering such portions as might have been lost since a similar officer had been appointed, which was some time before (*tot tempora*). He begs her to do this, that St. Peter the Apostle, who had the power of binding and loosing might give her joy in her offspring and absolution from all ills afterwards.[1]

A similar letter was sent to her son Childebert. In this the Pope speaks of the patrimony in question as being the property of "Peter, the Prince of the Apostles," and says he had appointed Candidus to take charge of it since he had heard that Dinamius the Patrician, who, on his recommendation, had governed it, could do so no longer. "To be a king," he said, "is nothing extraordinary, for there are other kings beside you; but to be a Catholic, which others are not deemed worthy to become—this is great indeed."[2] The Pope at the same time sent the king a set of keys of St. Peter, containing a portion of his chains, which, as we have seen, was a favourite gift of his.

In July 596 we find the Pope writing a letter to Palladius, Bishop of Saintes (*Santonensi*), who had informed him that he had built a church dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, and to the martyrs Lawrence and Pancratius, and had put in it thirteen altars, of which four had not been dedicated, because he desired to insert in them some relics of certain saints. The Pope accordingly sent the relics, and bade him receive them with reverence, and above

[1] *E. and H.* vi. 5; Barmby, vi. 5. [2] *Ib.* vi. 6.

all to provide for the priests ministering at the altars.[1] He also sent a fresh letter to Queen Brunichildis, who, it would seem, had also written asking for some relics of St. Peter and St. Paul, and bidding her (as he bade the bishop) see that they were reverently deposited, and that those in attendance on them were duly provided for.[2]

About this time we find Brunichildis making strong efforts to secure the pallium for her favourite bishop, Syagrius of Autun, to whom she was apparently under some obligation. It is probable that he was of noble birth, and related to Syagrius, the correspondent of Sidonius Apollinaris. He had been consecrated by St. Germanus of Paris about 560, and acquired great influence (probably by his courtly manners, tact, and culture) over King Guntran, and now over Queen Brunichildis. He became Bishop of Autun, where Vergilius, now Primate of France, had been archdeacon. He was a busy prelate, and attended numerous councils. St. Ancharius of Auxerre was his disciple. He himself was styled Saint, and his name-day is the 17th of August. That he was a person of excellent quality may be measured by the opinions recorded of him. Gregory of Tours calls him *venerabilis et egregius antistes*; Gregory the Pope, *reverendae memoriae episcopus*;[3] Venantius Fortunatus, *dominus sanctus et apostolica sede dignissimus papa*.[4] The surprise is that he was

[1] *E. and H.* vi. 48; Barmby, vi. 49.
[2] *E. and H.* vi. 55; Barmby, vi. 50.
[3] *E. and H.* xiii. 11.
[4] Migne, *Pat. Lat.* lxxxviii. 191.

never given one of the metropolitan sees, of which and of the pallium he was quite worthy.

We now reach perhaps the most disastrous event in Merovingian history, namely, the death of Childebert, King of Austrasia, in the early part of 596. He had been brought up by his mother to learn the duties of a sovereign, and he shared her wide and Imperial views, but he was doubtless dissipated, like most of his family, and died young accordingly. His death was much regretted at Rome, and doubtless also at Constantinople, for his relations with the Emperor Maurice had been, as we have seen, very friendly. He left two sons, both illegitimate, who were quite small boys, and who now succeeded him. Their names were Theodebert and Theodoric; the former took Austrasia, with his capital at Metz, and the latter Burgundy, with his capital at Orleans, and also resided sometimes at Châlon-sur-Saône. They were respectively ten and nine years old, and were under the tutelage of their strong-willed grandmother Brunichildis.[1] As Oman says: "She was hated as a Goth, as the stirrer-up of many bloody and unsuccessful wars, and as the slayer of many unruly nobles who had risen against the Crown in the days of her grandsons' minority." The whole of Gaul was now under the rule of three children (Neustria being subject to Chlothaire the Second), a condition of things almost incredible, and which necessarily led to the disintegration of the whole community and the substitution of a crowd

[1] Fredegar, ch. xvi.

of predatory nobles, each one virtually his own master, for the one mailed fist. Notwithstanding Brunichildis' skill, resources, and courage, she had not the necessary forces to save such a state from eventual anarchy and chaos.

Gaul had been torn in pieces for years past by the civil strife of the two queens Brunichildis and Fredegundis, the wife of Chilperic, King of Neustria, the latter of whom, as we have seen, was an intolerable woman, consumed by lust and violent passions, while her crimes form a notable chapter both of history and romance. She died in 597, after having unsparingly used poison and the dagger upon all who thwarted her. It is ominous of her character that Pope Gregory never mentions her. Her young son, Chlothaire II., after sustaining an unequal fight against the sons of Childebert, was now reduced to rule over a portion only of Neustria, namely, that which was bounded by the Seine, the Oise, and the sea.[1]

Dinamius, above mentioned, had retired into private life, and with his sister Aureliana had devoted himself to good works, and had endowed the Convent of St. Cassian at Marseilles, which they had perhaps founded in some private buildings of their own. Gregory, in a letter written in October 596, at their request, granted to Respecta, its abbess, certain privileges, namely, that on the death of any abbess there, she should be succeeded

[1] *Duodecim tantum pagi inter Esara* (*Oise*) *et Secona* (*Seine*) *et mare litores Oceani Chlothario remanserunt.* Fredegar, ch. xx.

not by a stranger, but by one elected from among its members, whom the bishop of the place should ordain. He further provided that no bishop or other ecclesiastic should have any power over the property of the nunnery, but it should be under the complete control of the abbess for the time being. If, again, on the Saint's anniversary or the dedication of the convent, the bishop should go thither to celebrate Mass, the Office must be so arranged that his throne (*cathedra*) should only be put in the chapel on the days when he was saying Mass, and on his departure it should be removed from the same (*de oratorio*). On other days the Mass was to be said by the priest who the bishop should appoint. On the other hand, he provided that the bishop was to punish the abbess or nuns according to the rigour of the recent canons, if any of them should commit a fault demanding punishment. The Pope concludes by an exhortation that the abbess should show zeal in so ordering her congregation that the malice of the malignant might not be aroused.[1]

In May 597 the Pope wrote to his rector in Gaul, Candidus, to say he had heard from a certain Dominican that his four brothers, who had been redeemed from slavery by the Jews, were now detained in their service at Narbonne, which was then in the land of the Visigoths. He told him that it was shameful for Christians to be thus living as servants in a Jewish house, and that he

[1] *E. and H.* vii. 12; Barmby, vii. 12.

should use due diligence to have them redeemed and released.[1] The Visigothic laws of King Reccared specially forbade the holding of Christians in servitude by Jews.[2] In July 597 Gregory again wrote to Dinamius the Patrician and his sister Aureliana acknowledging their letter and the religious zeal which it showed, and promising that when it was completed he would send them the book for which they had asked.[3]

In September of the same year the Pope wrote to Brunichildis praising her Christian fervour, and telling her that in accordance with her expressed wish he had greatly desired to confer the pallium on the Bishop of Autun (who, be it remembered, was only a suffragan bishop, while his Metropolitan, the Archbishop of Lyons, had not himself received it). The Pope said he had now got the Emperor's consent through his agent at Constantinople. He goes on to say that many good reports had reached him about Syagrius, and especially from "John the *Regionarius*"; "but," added the Pope, "there had been many hindrances." In the first place, the person who had been sent for the pallium was implicated in the error of schism (*i.e.* probably in regard to the Three Chapters), next, the queen wished the distinction to come from the Pope himself, and not at her suggestion, while the bishop, for whom it was desired, had not asked for it, which had been hitherto a condition of granting it. Inas-

[1] See Greg. of Tours, vii. 21.
[2] See *E. and H.* i. p. 464, note.
[3] *Ib.* vii. 33.

much, however, as he was wishful to comply with her request, he had sent it to the rector, Candidus, charging him to deliver it in the Pope's stead. Syagrius was in the meanwhile to draw up a petition with the other bishops, and give it to Candidus. He then goes on to press her not to allow any one in her dominion to obtain Holy Orders by bribes or by any one's patronage or relationship, but only to let such be elected to the episcopate or other offices as most deserved it by their life and manners, for it was a wicked thing to sell the Holy Spirit. Nor was she to suffer a layman to be consecrated as a bishop, nor until by long practice he had learnt what to imitate and what to teach.

The Pope goes on to beg her to recall to the unity of the faith those schismatics who had severed themselves from the Church, and explains that he refers explicitly to the question of the Three Chapters. His words are worth quoting. "As for us," he says, "we venerate and follow in all respects the Synod of Chalcedon, whence they take to themselves the clouds of a pestiferous excuse (*pestiferae nebulas excusationis adsumunt*), and we anathematise all who presume to diminish or add to them. "They," he says (meaning the schismatics), "reject the Universal Church, and all the four Patriarchs" (*omnes quatuor patriarchas . . . refugiant*). "He who had been sent for the pallium, when he was asked why he stood separated from the Universal Church, acknowledged that he did not know."

Lastly, Gregory begs the queen to restrain her subjects from sacrificing to idols, worshipping trees, or exhibiting sacrilegious sacrifices of the heads of animals (*ut idolis non immolent, cultores arborum non existant, de animalium capitibus sacrificia sacrilega non exhibeant*), because he had heard that many of the Christians combined going to church with the worship of demons. This he begs her to do for fear that baptism, instead of rescuing them, should rather add to their punishment. He bade her also speedily punish the violent, the adulterous, and the thief. In regard to the volume she had asked for he had sent it, and had asked his representative, Candidus, to give it to her, and he concluded with commending her to the protection of the Almighty.[1] This is a very interesting letter for many reasons. In the first place, it shows that the distant emperor still claimed the right to veto the giving of the pallium, in the case of sees not previously so distinguished. Secondly, it shows that the Church in Gaul at this time was largely permeated if not entirely devoted to the so-called heresy of the Three Chapters. Thirdly, it proves what a survival of paganism there still was among the reputedly Christian Franks. This survival was especially prevalent among the rustics of Austrasia and Maritime Neustria. It is interesting to note how vigorous Brunichildis continued to be at this time. "Vigilant and alert, she was ever travelling restlessly around the borders of the realm spying out rebels to crush,

[1] *E. and H.* viii. 4.

building roads and castles, keeping a wary eye upon every count and bishop."[1]

It is some time before Gregory is again found corresponding with Gaul. In May–June 599, he wrote to Desiderius, the Bishop of Vienne, about a certain Pancratius, the bearer of the letter, who was a papal deacon (*diaconus apostolorum*), and now wished to become a monk, but the bishop had put some pressure on him to remain a secular. The Pope urged him not to oppose the man's wish, which was merely to retire from the Church militant to a more peaceful one.[2] This shows how the Pope's heart was still glowing warmly for the ascetic against the secular form of the religious life.

At this time we find him sending an important personage to Gaul with letters to the various bishops, and with the special commission to restore the lost discipline of the Church there in regard to simony, etc. This was Cyriacus, who was then the Abbot of St. Andrew's, and therefore, no doubt, specially trusted by Gregory. Among others to whom he commended him was Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, to whom he wrote in July 599. In his letter the Pope takes the opportunity of rebuking the bishop for having broken and cast out certain images or perhaps pictures (*imagines*) in churches which he had found people were adoring. While commending his zeal in preventing objects made with hands from becoming the subject-matter of worship, he blames him for breaking the images,

[1] See Oman, *op. cit.* 163. [2] *E. and H.* ix. 157.

since pictorial representations were made use of in churches, so that those ignorant of letters might read, by looking at the walls, what they could not read in books, and he tells him he ought to have preserved the images and rebuked the people.[1]

Cyriacus also carried letters for other bishops; one of them was addressed to Vergilius, Bishop of Arles. This was apparently inspired by some one at Arles. It recalls that King Childebert had founded a monastery for men there, and endowed it with certain property, and in order to ensure that his purpose might be fully carried out, and that the monks should not be disturbed, he had requested the Holy See to confirm his grant and to confer certain privileges on the monastery, both in the management of its affairs and the appointment of the abbot. This he did because he felt that what had been settled by the Apostolic See no exercise of unlawful usurpation would afterwards molest. The Pope says that in furtherance of this wish his own predecessor Vigilius had written to Aurelius, the previous Bishop of Arles, supporting with apostolical authority what was intended to be done. He, Gregory, now wrote to remind Vergilius of what Aurelius had done, and to confirm it.[2]

In another letter of the same date, addressed to Arigius, Bishop of Gap, consoling him for the death of some of his relatives, the Pope goes on to say he had been informed that when the bishop

[1] *E. and H.* ix. 208; Barmby, ix. 105.
[2] *E. and H.* ix. 216; Barmby, ix. 111.

was at Rome he had asked that he and his archdeacon might be permitted to wear dalmatics. This had been delayed because of the sickness already named, and because the Pope did not wish to concede a new thing inconsiderately and suddenly. He now granted the demand, and sent the dalmatics by the hands of the Abbot Cyriacus.

The journey of Cyriacus was directed especially to Autun, for whose bishop he was taking the long-promised pallium. The Pope had granted this on condition that he would summon a synod to put down the crime of simony, to prevent laymen from receiving ecclesiastical appointments, and women living in the houses of clerics; and he desired Syagrius and also Arigius, the Bishop of Gap, to write and inform him by letter of all its proceedings.[1]

While Brunichildis was entirely devoted to her bishop, Syagrius of Autun, she was implacable towards another prelate, one of the four Metropolitans of Gaul, namely, Desiderius, Archbishop of Vienne, who had denounced her incestuous marriage with her nephew. She accordingly thwarted him in every way she could, and eventually, after the death of Gregory, had him put to death. Vienne was once the capital of the ancient Provincia Viennensis.[2] When the prætorian præfect of Gaul removed his quarters thence to Arles, the latter became the metropolis, soon after which the Bishop of Arles began to be decorated

[1] *E. and H.* ix. 219. [2] *Not. Gall.* xi. 3.

with the pallium by the Pope.[1] There was therefore a good deal of *prima facie* plausibility in the claim set up by the See of Vienne, and long maintained, of its primacy over Arles, and in its bishop asking for the pallium for himself. Desiderius urged upon the Pope that his predecessors had had it in former times (*usum pallii ejus sacerdotes antiquitus habuisse*).[2]

While the Pope would doubtless have conceded the pallium to so famous a man and to so famous a see, he was afraid of exasperating Queen Brunichildis, so he had to temporise. In a letter written to him in July 599, he says he had been informed by the Regionarius John, of the ancient privileges conferred on Vienne by the Holy See, including the use of the pallium. He had, accordingly, had the register searched, but had found no evidence there; if any were forthcoming he would attend to it (*Nam qui nova concedimus, vetera libentissime reparamus*).[3] This was evidently an evasion. In a short letter of the same date to Candidus, the rector of the patrimony, he bids him, if he can, to help a Gallic priest called Aurelius who desired to have charge of an oratory (*oratorium, i.e.* a chapel), or undertake a charge of a priest or abbot.[4]

As a result of the struggle between the Lombards and the Franks, certain parishes had been detached from the diocese of Turin (Taurina) and formed by King Guntran into the new See of St. Jean de

[1] *E. and H.* ix. 220, note.
[2] *Ib.* ix. 220.
[3] *Ib.* ix. 220.
[4] *Ib.* ix. 221.

Maurienne, subject to the Franks. Gregory accordingly wrote to Syagrius about it. In his letter he says that, after the captivity and plunder of the Bishop of Turin, he had suffered serious prejudice in his parishes (*in parochiis suis*) which were within the boundaries of the Franks, even to the extent of another person having been constituted bishop there without his having committed any crime, and had also been deprived of the property of his church, while an innocent priest had been removed from his altar. The Pope entreats Syagrius, therefore, to protect him, and to see that no wrong was done to him. He was to act in the matter not only on his own initiative, but by a special appeal to the two young kings.[1]

This letter the Pope supported by one addressed to the two latter rulers, recalling the facts to them, begging them to make due inquiry and to correct the wrong by restoring to the Bishop of Turin, who was called Ursicinus, the parishes formerly in his see, and also the property belonging to them. Nor should the fact of his church being detained for the present by his enemies be at all to his disadvantage.[2] As Mr. Dudden says, the Pope's suggestion was impracticable. It was not reasonable to suppose that in those days, when bishops were so powerful, a ruler would allow a portion of his territory to be under the ecclesiastical supervision of a foreign bishop. A Frankish king might reasonably think

[1] *E. and H.* ix. 214, and note ; Barmby, ix. 115.
[2] *E. and H.* ix. 226 ; Barmby, ix. 116.

that if the churches were restored the parishes would presently be claimed by the Duke of Turin as part of his dominions. Gregory's remonstrance was therefore of no effect, and the diocese of Maurienne continued to be a thorn in the side of the Lombard prelate.[1]

In another letter to Syagrius he writes, with regard to two refractory bishops, namely, Menas of Toulon, on whom he makes a pun, *illi episcopatus nomen non sit in honore sed onere*, and adds that he was a very secular person and had gone to Gaul. The other, Theodore, who belonged to the Province of Milan, had also gone to Gaul to escape from the discipline he had incurred. The Pope begs Syagrius to see to it that both of them were sent back to Italy to be duly dealt with.[2] It is curious that the two letters to Syagrius just cited should have been written to one who, however great his prestige, was not a Metropolitan, and only a simple bishop.

In another letter addressed to the same bishop and of the same date, the Pope speaks highly of the reputation of his correspondent. He goes on to say that in accordance with his request he had sent him the pallium, to be used in the celebration of Mass only, and he was to have it on condition that he would summon a synod to correct the things of which he had complained. While the granting of the pallium was not to interfere with the Metropolitan authority of the Church of Lyons, it was to be understood as conferring on his diocese of Autun

[1] Dudden, ii. 77. [2] *E. and H.* ix. 223.

and himself, as bishop, the first place immediately after Lyons. The other bishops were to take rank according to the dates of their ordination, whether in sitting in synod or subscribing their names, etc., and he ends up by hoping that his increase of dignity would be marked by increased zeal.[1] The conferring of the pallium on Syagrius, while it was withheld from others having Metropolitan rank, is a proof of the extent to which Gregory carried his courtly deference to Brunichildis. In a similar letter of the same date addressed by the Pope to Syagrius of Autun, Etherius of Lyons, Vergilius of Arles, and Desiderius of Vienne (let it be noted that Syagrius is mentioned first), he says he approaches them by his present writings, in accordance with the apostolic institutes, so that, leaning on the rules of the Fathers and the Lord's commands (the order of the words is curious), they might put away avarice. He goes on to say how he had long heard of the simoniacal practices prevailing in Gaul, and adds that one who buys an ecclesiastical office covets not to be a priest, but to be *called* one. It prevents there being any trial of a man's conduct, any carefulness about his moral character, or any inquiry into his life, and shows that he alone is deemed worthy who can pay the price. He calls attention to this being the oldest of all heresies, and one which was specially condemned by the apostles (*i.e.* in the case of Simon Magus). In regard to those who argued that the price paid in such cases accrued to the advantage

[1] *E. and H.* ix. 222.

of the poor, he said that it could not be accounted almsgiving when that was dispensed to the poor which was got by unlawful dealings. If hospitals and monasteries were built with the price of sacred "orders," it did not profit, for he who buys does more harm than he who dispenses the price. All simoniacal heresy, under guise of almsgiving, was therefore to be abjured.

The Pope then goes on to reprobate another practice prevalent in Gaul, and already mentioned, namely, the sudden elevation of laymen into bishops without passing through the lower orders. He also calls attention to the practice of women living with those in sacred orders, and holds that they must have no women living with them save those whom the sacred canons allowed. Lastly, to prevent dissensions, he urges that priests should assemble together sometimes, so that there might be discussion about cases that arose, and salutary conference about ecclesiastical observances, and points out that by the rules of the Fathers a synod was to be held twice annually, or at least once without fail, so that nothing wrong or unlawful might be ventured upon while a council was being delayed, and adjures them to keep this regulation for their posterity. He accordingly asks them to summon a general synod. This, he counselled, should be held under the presidency of Arigius, the Bishop of Gap (which seems a mistake for Syagrius of Autun), and the Abbot Cyriacus. At such a gathering all things opposed to the sacred canons should be condemned,

and notably the matters above named, concerning all of which Bishop Syagrius and Cyriacus were to fully inform him.[1] The synod was apparently either not summoned, or inefficient, for we presently find the Pope again writing about the same abuses.

At the same time, with the above letter, a second one was sent to the two young Frankish kings, Theodebert and Theodoric, in which he also denounces the simony already mentioned. He further complains of certain churches which had been relieved from paying taxes having to pay them in another way in the form of bribes, and he also reprobates the sudden promotion of laymen to be bishops, and consequently asks the kings, as a great gift to God, to order a synod to be summoned, in which it might be ordained, in the presence of Cyriacus, that these things should be condemned and stopped. He also expressed his distress that Jews were allowed to keep Christian slaves in their kingdoms, and asks them to issue an ordinance on the subject.[2]

Lastly, Gregory sent a letter to Brunichildis, the strong-willed grandmother of the two boys and the real ruler of Gaul, which is phrased in diplomatic and complimentary terms, in which he calls attention to the same abuses and asks that the synod upon which his heart was so set might be summoned in the presence of Cyriacus, when these things should be forbidden. The Pope tells her he has

[1] *E. and H.* ix. 218; Barmby, ix. 106.
[2] *E. and H.* ix. 215; Barmby, ix. 110.

taken special care to delegate the management of this synod to Syagrius, "who," he says, "we know to be peculiarly your own," and begs her, therefore, to lend a willing ear to his supplication on this account. Because he had shown great zeal in the English mission (*vide infra*), he had sent him a pallium as a reward and encouragement, and he concludes with a renewed mention about the employment of Christian servants by Jews.[1]

In another letter of this date, written to Vergilius, Bishop of Arles, and Syagrius of Autun in regard to a certain Syagria (probably a lady of rank), who, having entered a religious house and even changed her habit, had been forced to marry; he charges that they had failed to interfere in her defence. He plainly tells them that if this was so they were rather hirelings than shepherds, and bids them exhort the woman, so that she might make amends with weeping for the loss of chastity, "which in her body it was not allowed her to preserve," and further, that as she still desired to devote her property to pious uses, she might be permitted, after putting aside a due provision for her children, to do so. He bids them take his brotherly admonition kindly, since even a bitter cup is taken gladly when offered with a view to health.[2]

In October 600, Gregory wrote to Conon, the Abbot of Lerins, praising him for the way he ruled his monastery, of which he had heard from

[1] *E. and H.* ix. 213; Barmby, ix. 109.
[2] *E. and H.* ix. 224; Barmby, ix. 114.

his own fellow-bishop, Menas, the Bishop of Toulon ("Telesinus"), of whom he had made complaints in an earlier letter. He contrasts his conduct with the laxity of his predecessor, Stephen, and duly encourages him.[1] At the same time he wrote a sharp and caustic letter to Serenus, the Bishop of Marseilles, who, it would seem, had questioned the genuineness of the Pope's previous rebuke about images, which he had suggested had been concocted by Cyriacus. Gregory again pressed on him the difference between adoring a picture and using it for edification and for the illiterate to learn from. He further says that antiquity had (not without reason) allowed the histories of saints to be painted in venerable places. The Pope adds that in consequence of the bishop's acts the greater part of his spiritual children had suspended themselves from his communion. If he could not retain his old sheep, how could he attract new ones? and he bade him use zeal to recall those who had left. He should call them together and show them from Scripture that nothing made with hands is to be adored. He must also tell them that he had broken the pictorial representations because he had seen them misuse them, and that if they merely wished to learn from them he would have them restored and thus appease them, and he should press on them that "they ought from the pictures to catch the ardour of compunction and bow themselves in adoration before God." He further rebukes Serenus for associating with bad

[1] *E. and H.* xi. 9; Barmby, xi. 12.

men, *inter alios*, with a certain priest who had given way to his lust, and bids him cut himself off entirely from him, while as to others reported to be bad, he was to restrain them by fatherly exhortation, and if they would not obey he was to cast them out. He bade him remember how execrable it was in the sight of men if vices were nurtured by those whose duty it was to punish them.[1]

On 22nd June, Gregory wrote to Vergilius of Arles, counselling him who claimed to have his own hands clean from simony to exercise the jurisdiction which belonged to him and restrain others, and to insist on a synod being summoned to root it out. He also called his attention to the complaints he had received about his fellow-bishop, Serenus of Marseilles, as referred to in the previous letter, and asked him to inquire into them.[2]

At the same time the Pope wrote to Desiderius, Bishop of Vienne, who, it seems, had asked him for some favour (probably a pallium). This, Gregory suggests, he felt disposed to grant him, but he had hesitated, since he had found that he was in the habit of expounding grammar to certain persons. The teaching of grammar no doubt involved the use of materials and examples from heathen literature. This the Pope took amiss, since he said the "praises of Christ cannot find room in the same mouth as the praise of Jupiter." "And, consider," he says, "what a heinous thing it is for a bishop to sing

[1] *E. and H.* xi. 10; Barmby, xi. 13.
[2] *E. and H.* xi. 38; Barmby, xi. 55.

what is not even becoming in a religious layman." Candidus the Rector, on his return to Rome, had denied the reports about Desiderius, and tried to excuse him, but the Pope seems to have doubted his testimony. If it should prove to be false, he said, that he devoted himself to trifles and secular literature, he would, without hesitation, grant what he had requested.[1] This letter confirms the view that Gregory entirely disliked secular literature, and no doubt his influence greatly depressed its study in favour of obscurantism in the Western Church. It also afforded him a fresh excuse for refusing Desiderius the pallium and thus preventing Brunichildis from feeling sore. In a letter of the same date, written to Aetherius of Lyons, he commends him in glowing terms for his zeal, obedience, and rectitude, but, as usual, presses him with the other bishops to summon a synod as soon as might be in order to put down the scandal of simony. In regard to the privileges claimed by him for the bishops of his see, as of ancient custom, the Pope says he had had search made, but could find no evidence of it, and he prudently asked to be furnished with the evidence, so that he might know what ought to be granted.[2]

In a second letter of the same date, written to the Bishop of Gap (Vapincense) in affectionate terms, the Pope commends Candidus the Rector of the patrimony of St. Peter.[3] He similarly commends

[1] *E. and H.* xi. 34; Barmby, xi. 54.
[2] *E. and H.* xi. 40.
[3] *Ib.* xi. 44.

him in another letter of equal date to Asclepiodotus the Patrician of the Gauls. He asks the latter to help and support Candidus in his arduous labours of providing for the poor, etc. The Pope also sends him a key of the sepulchre containing filings from St. Peter's chains to wear about his neck as a charm,[1] assuring him they would protect him against all ills (*omnia adversa vos muniat*).

In another letter, of 22nd June 601, he asks Vergilius, Bishop of Arles, to receive kindly, and take friendly counsel with, the Bishop of Autun if by chance he should visit him. The latter bishop had probably been on a visit to Rome.[2]

In two letters of commendation written to the two young Frank princes, Theodoric and Theodebert on behalf of missionaries going to Britain, the Pope again urges upon them both, in reply to their letters offering to further the cause of the Church, to summon a synod to deal with simony.[3] In a similar letter, dated the 22nd of June 601, written to Brunichildis and in which the language of fulsome diplomacy is again liberally used, Gregory acknowledges her letters expressing her good disposition towards the Church, and again presses her to summon a synod to put down simony in the kingdoms of her grandsons.[4]

In June 601, Gregory wrote a letter to Chlothaire, the King of Neustria, being the only direct communication with that kingdom which we know

[1] *E. and H.* xi. 43. [2] *Ib.* xi. 45.
[3] *E. and H.* xi. 47, 50; xi. 59, 60.
[4] *E. and H.* xi. 49; Barmby, xi. 62.

he ever had. In it he urges upon him his usual refrain, namely, to summon a synod to put down abuses in the Church.[1] It is curious that this letter should have been the only one he wrote on the subject which had any effect, for we hear of synods being called by Chlothaire in 601 and in 603 or 604.[2]

It is not possible to read the correspondence here condensed between the great Pope and the rulers and bishops of France without having our regard for him enhanced. In season and out of season he presses upon them the shameful condition of Church discipline among the Franks, the widespread, unblushing simony, the appointment of illiterate and untrained men to the great sees, etc. etc., and he urges upon them the only possible remedy alike efficient and likely to last, namely, the regular summoning of provincial synods for the discussion and trial and prevention of such abuses. It is equally clear that his advice and counsel were unpopular. The rulers, with the notable exception of Guntran of Burgundy, revelled in the profit and power that came to them in this Erastian land by allowing things to remain as they were, while the bishops who had been

[1] *E. and H.* xi. 51 ; Barmby, xi. 61.

[2] Dudden, 69. This is apparently the last genuine letter written by Gregory to the princes or bishops of Gaul. The letters to Brunichildis (*E. and H.* xiii. 7), to Aetherius the Bishop (*ib.* 8), to King Theodoric (*ib.* 9), to Senator, priest, and abbot (*ib.* 11), to Talasia, abbess (*ib.* 12), and to Lupus, priest and abbot (*ib.* 13), all dated in November 602, seem to me open to the gravest suspicion. *Vide ante*, Introduction.

for many years without restraint or criticism were impatient of both.

It must be said that the Pope's methods were not always easy to bear. The Bishop of Autun was a venerable and respectable old gentleman, and under other conditions none would have questioned his desire for the pallium, which gave him dignity and prestige among his brethren, but he was, after all, a suffragan of the Archbishop of Lyons, and to give him the pallium, while withholding it from his Metropolitan, was not likely to conciliate the latter. Again, in regard to the Archbishop of Vienne; to refuse him the same distinction because the imperious Queen of Austrasia had a bitter personal dislike to him, and to write him letters reproving him for reading the classics, as if he were a schoolboy and not a distinguished scholar, was hardly likely to be cheerfully forgiven. It would seem that on all sides among those who were powerful to initiate reforms in Gaul, there were very few who felt disposed to march along the road pointed out by the Pope, and in those turbulent, difficult times even sympathetic bishops might feel some hesitation in calling together their clergy too often, and having all kinds of uncomfortable questions raised. On the other hand, the Pope dealt with the *secular* rulers of Gaul with a skilful and tender hand. He forgave them much because they were orthodox and perhaps also because he felt that they came from a rough untutored stock, among whom the

amenities of life had been little studied, and he doubtless thought, as did St. Francis of Sales, that "more flies are caught by a spoonful of honey than by a whole barrel of vinegar." One other prudent thing he also did in carefully studying and avoiding the prejudices and the sensitive jealousy of the rough Frankish kings by not encroaching on their privileges and power. He fully conceded to them the right to summon synods to approve decrees and to suppress ecclesiastical abuses.

Mr. Kellett has a striking passage on the subsequent history of the intercourse of the Popes with Gaul. He says: "After the death of Gregory the First, communication between the popes and the kings and bishops of Gaul seems to have practically ceased for many years. The failure of the great Pope to effect any reformation in that country appears to have deterred his feeble successors from attempting it. The disorganisation of the Church then became complete. After Vergilius no vicar of the Apostolic see was nominated for nearly a century and a half. No Metropolitans were appointed. Every bishop became independent, and did what seemed right in his own eyes. To add to the darkness of the outlook Columban and his monks were expelled by Brunichildis, and thus the clearest light of Christianity in Gaul was quenched."[1] On the other hand, monasticism flourished and spread exceedingly, but there was no direct intercourse with or control by Rome.

[1] Kellett, *Cambridge Hist. Essays*, ii. 82.

For more than a century, says Mr. Dudden, there appears to have been no intercourse between the popes and the Frank rulers; at any rate, till the time of Gregory the Second no documents exist which can be quoted in proof of any intercommunication. Rome left the Merovingian princes to their fate.[1]

[1] *Op. cit.* ii. 98.

CHAPTER VI

It will be now interesting to shortly picture to ourselves the condition and administration of the patrimony of St. Peter at this time. It was, in fact, enormous in extent, and comprised lands granted by the Emperor, legacies or gifts from the faithful rich, especially those who had withdrawn to monasteries, and many other sources. Grisar calculates its amount at 1800 square miles of territory and £300,000 of income, while an Italian estimate, says Dudden, puts the area at 1360 square miles, and the revenue at £120,000 in money, and £300,000 in kind. It was scattered over a wide area, its largest and most fertile portions being in Sicily and Africa. Another portion was situated at Ravenna, and other small estates were in Liguria and the Cottian Alps. In Central Italy were properties in the old province of Samnium, near Nursia in the Sabine country and about Tivoli. Between the Appian Way and the Via Latina, and as far as the sea, was the *Patrimonium Appiae*, while on the left bank of the Tiber was the largest estate of all, known as the *Patrimonium Tusciae*. A third estate, known as the *Patrimonium Labicanae*, extended between the Via Labicana

PORTRAIT OF ST. GREGORY IN STATE DRESS, FROM AN IVORY DIPTYCH ON A BOOK AT MONZA, PRESENTED BY HIM TO QUEEN THEODELINDA.

To face p. 184.

and the Arno, while the fourth extended from the Via Tiburtina to the Tiber, and was known as the *Patrimonium Tiburtinum.* These estates near Rome eventually included the greater part of the Ager Romanus, comprising most of the modern Campagna,[1] and were dotted with olive plantations. In Rome itself the popes owned considerable house property and gardens. They also had an estate at Minturnae, as well as the islands known as Isole di Ponza on the coast. The forests of Lucania and Bruttii supplied them with wood for church building and repairs, and other possessions were situated at Otranto and Gallipoli in the heel of Italy. Outside Italy the Pope's wide estates at Germanicia, near Hippo in Africa, and especially in Sicily, were the principal granaries of impoverished Italy. He also had properties in Sardinia and Corsica, small estates in Dalmatia (where the property was known as *Recula S. Petri inter Dalmatias*[2]) and Illyria, and lands also in the south of Gaul; but he apparently owned no land in Spain or the East.[3] A portion of these estates was leased in perpetuity, or for a life and two specified heirs, for a fixed rent, by a contract called *emphyteusis.* In the case of worthless lands the lease was a perpetual one. It is a good proof of the popularity of these leases, and the prosperity of the tenants under them, that the Pope should write to his deputy Peter, to tell him that many came to Rome desiring

[1] Gregorovius, *op. cit.* i. 388, 389. [2] Grisar, *op. cit.* 600.
[3] Gregorovius, i. 387; Dudden, i. 297, 298.

lands on islands belonging to the Church. To some, he says, he had granted leases and refused them to others, and he wished him to take care in the matter, as his only motive ought to be the good of the Church.[1] In another letter written to the Defensor Romanus, he warns him against accepting as tenants the Imperial recruiting officers called *scribones*, since they had a bad reputation. One of them, whom he calls *Gentis vir magnificus scribo*, for whom he makes an exception, should be charged a rent of 20 pigs, 20 wethers, and 60 fowls.[2] A much larger part of the patrimony was not leased, but owned as an English gentleman owns his estate, and its administration was controlled and superintended by the ubiquitous and indefatigable Pope. The stewards and administrators of these estates under his supervision were called *rectores patrimonii*. They had generally been laymen, but Gregory chiefly employed deacons and subdeacons, or, in remote districts, even bishops for the purpose. To them he was continually writing letters of guidance or reproach. Under them there were certain officials called *defensores ecclesiae*, or Church guardians, whose appointment needed for its sanction letters under the Pope's own hand. The protection of the poor is specified in one of Gregory's letters, as the main object of these *defensores*. They were also to recover runaway slaves, and lands which belonged to the Holy See, and had been unjustly

[1] *E. and H.* i. 79; Barmby, i. 72. See also *E. and H.* ix. 125.
[2] *E. and H.* ix. 78.

occupied by others; but they had frequently a much wider commission. Dr. Barmby has collected some details about their duties. Not only were they to carry out works of charity, but also to maintain the rights and property of churches, to rectify abuses in monasteries and hospitals, to see to the canonical election of bishops, and to the supply of ecclesiastical ministrations during the suspension or incapacity of the holders of sees, to assist bishops in the exercise of discipline, and even to rebuke and coerce bishops themselves when negligent in their duty, and to admonish them when living immoral lives, to act against heretics, and to arrange about holding local synods. In some cases they were also themselves *rectores patrimonii.* They constituted a *schola*, or guild, as did also the notaries and subdeacons. In 598 Gregory directed that seven of them in Rome should be styled *rectores regionarii*, as was already the case with the notaries and subdeacons. These Regional rectors were entitled to sit in assemblies of the clergy when the Pope was not present, and they managed the property in the seven regions of Rome. They were not necessarily in sacred orders, but might marry and have families. To assist the defensors and rectors were a lower grade of officials styled *actores*, answering to our clerks, who had to be tonsured, and whose offices were conferred by diploma. When the work was specially heavy, another class, *i.e.* sworn notaries (*notarii*, also called *chartularii*), were appointed. The head of the notaries was called *Primicerius notariorum.* All these officials

had to keep account books, and to present them every indiction.[1]

Below these again were the *conductores*, or "farmers," each of whom superintended "a *massa*," or estate, comprising several farms (*fundi*). They collected the rents and dues (*pensiones*) from the peasants, which were paid in money and kind, and were responsible to the Roman agents for the amount; like other publicans in similar position, they were often exacting, cruel, and oppressive. Their posts were hereditary, and guardians of their interests were duly appointed during the infancy of their children.

Such was the hierarchy of officials which the Pope had doubtless partially inherited from the old Roman polity. The actual tillers of the soil were divided into two classes—the peasants, or serfs, called *coloni*, or *rustici*, and the slaves. Although nominally free, the former were attached to the soil (*ascripti glebae*), and could not move or marry out of the estate on which they worked, without permission. They had private property, which was, however, always considered to be pledged for the next rent: they could not sell it without the landlord's consent. In legal actions they must be represented by the landlord, and could be punished by him at his discretion. They were, however, protected by documentary titles, each one having his rights and duties entered in a separate register named *Libellus securitatis*.[2] Slavery was a recognised institution,

[1] Barmby, *Letters of Saint Gregory*, etc., Prolegomena, vii., viii., xii.

[2] Gregorovius, *ib.* 388; Dudden, *op. cit.* i. 305.

and there were large numbers of slaves who acted as herdsmen, shepherds, and tillers of the soil on the lands occupied directly by the Pope and by private proprietors on what we call demesne lands.

To protect these hardly-used *coloni* and slaves was the duty of the Rector, who represented the Pope on each estate.

The best known of these rectors was the subdeacon Peter, whom the Pope refers to so tenderly in the opening scene of his famous *Dialogues*, when he tells us that from his earliest youth he had been his bosom friend, and had shared his studies in Holy Scripture. He was a somewhat careless, happy-go-lucky creature, transparently honest and simple, and the Pope in his letters to him treats him and his faults with a mixture of tenderness and gentle sarcasm. He by turns rebukes and pleads with him on his inattention and unbusinesslike habits like an affectionate uncle. To him he entrusted the care of the papal patrimony in Sicily, which was divided into two estates, the Syracusan and Palermitan. Peter's predecessors had performed their duties tyrannically, and permitted a great many iniquities to be done in the name of the Church, and Gregory in his correspondence gives him minute instructions how he was to act.

The Church lands were tilled, as we have seen, by the native peasants (*coloni*). They enjoyed the result of their labours subject to the payment of a certain land-tax (*burdatio*) and also of a tithe of the produce, sometimes paid in kind and sometimes com-

muted. These dues had, no doubt, been in former times paid to the Roman officials, and the Church merely succeeded to them. The *massae* (or *praediae*) were sometimes grouped into larger estates, which were farmed out to farmers (*conductores*), the farmers accounting for certain amounts to the Church and exacting what they could from the peasants. This method of collecting dues naturally led to oppression.

Among the abuses which had sprung up, and which Gregory commissioned his agent Peter to correct, were the use of false measures for weighing the tithed grain and that purchased from the peasants for the use of the State, and the over-valuation of the tithe when it had been compounded for a year of plenty and was made the measure of years of scarcity. It had been the custom, in addition to the tithe, to exact various extras, such as granary dues, etc., while the farmers claimed illegally to take for themselves $3\frac{1}{2}$ out of every 70 measures of grain. This was now disallowed, and each peasant was to have a charter made out, specifying the exact amount he had to pay. Unjust and excessive weights were ordered to be broken. The *burdatio* was apparently the tax due to the civil power. In order that the peasants (who had to pay it before their crops were available) should be able to do so, they were obliged to borrow money at exorbitant rates from pawnbrokers. Gregory provided that the Rector should advance the money and have it repaid by instalments.

In regard to the marriage fees (*nuptiale com-*

moda) of the rustics, they were in no case to exceed a *solidus*, or gold piece, and if the people were poor they were to pay less. These fees were not to be credited to the Church, but to the farmers (*conductores*). The heirs of the farmers were to succeed to their goods, and they were not to be confiscated to the Church, as had often been the case; and if they left little children, guardians were to be appointed for them.

If any one of a family misbehaved he was to be personally punished and not fined, as the fine would come out of the common fund of the family, and so all would be punished for the fault of one; and no presents were to be received from such ill-doers. If a farmer made an exaction from a peasant and was compelled to refund, the sum was to be returned to the peasant, so that the Church should not share in his rapacity. New tenants of the farms were not to pay consideration for their position, which would be a temptation to change them, and thus the land would cease to be cultivated. In the case of a certain farmer, Theodosius, who had been a defaulter in the payment of his dues and had exacted a double payment from the peasants of their tax, this was to be returned to them out of the sale of his effects; if any balance remained over, it was to be paid to his daughter, who was also to have her father's basin (*baciola*[1]) returned to her.

In another case, after providing for the rectifica-

[1] *E. and H.* i. 42.

tion of several small acts of injustice and of misfortune of a private kind, Gregory orders his agent to set apart a portion of the money of the church of Canusium for the relief of the clergy there, who seem to have been in want.

In regard to lapsed priests, *i.e.* those who had committed some offence, rendering them liable to excommunication, he provided that they should be sent to some poor monastery to be reclaimed by penance; their property was to be given to their relations, but a portion was to be reserved for the poor monks who took charge of them; if they belonged to a community the Church was to retain a claim to this property.

It had been the practice for subdeacons to marry, but it seems, from a letter of the Pope to the subdeacon Peter, dated May 591, that three years before, an order had been issued in Sicily forbidding them to have conjugal intercourse with their wives. This Gregory deemed unreasonable, but in future no married men were to be ordained. None but those subdeacons who had lived in chastity were to be advanced in the Church.

In the same letter[1] Peter was to see to the nuisance which had arisen in consequence of the disturbance of monasteries in the recent wars, by which many monks were wandering from monastery to monastery without leave of the abbots. In another letter he advises him to settle certain vagrant monks together with the Bishop of Taurianum, in Bruttii

[1] *E. and H.* i. 42.

(whom they had once obeyed), in the Monastery of St. Theodore, at Messina.[1]

In regard to a monk who had left half of his property to the *Defensor* Fantinus, and thus broken a very rigid monastic rule about owning private property, the Pope nevertheless ordered that the money should be paid over, since Fantinus had deserved, but not yet received, a proper recompense for his services.

It is surprising, in reading these letters, to see the tender solicitude shown for all the oppressed and suffering, especially for women and children, and the care taken by the Pope that anything that had been unjustly done should be rectified. *Inter alia*, he sent back three onyx phials (*amulae onichinae*) which had been sent to him, and which he ordered to be restored to the owner, from whom they had been improperly taken.[2]

In another letter written to the same agent, the Pope enters into details in regard to the management of his farms in Sicily, which show what a practical man of business he was. Thus he writes: "Cows which are barren with age, or bulls which are useless, ought to be sold, so that some profit may accrue from them. As to the herds of mares which we keep very unprofitably, I wish them all to be disposed of except 400 of the younger ones for breeding." Those dispensed with were to be handed over to the farmers, to be turned into cash, so that they might make some return for the loss

[1] *E. and H.* i. 39. [2] *Ib.* i. 42, and vol. i. p. 68, note 4.

they had caused in successive years, "for it is hard for us to spend 60 solidi on the herdsmen and not get sixty pence from the herds." The herdsmen, he thought, "should also make some profit out of the cultivation of the ground. All the implements at Syracuse and Palermo belonging to the Church must be sold before they perished entirely from age." Then comes a passage showing that the Pope's palfreys came from Sicily, where in the time of Pindar the best coursers for the circus were bred. Gregory is sarcastic on the subject: "Thou hast sent me one wretched nag (*caballum miserum*) and five good asses. The nag I cannot ride, it is such a wretched one, and those 'good asses' I cannot ride because they are asses (*non sedere possum quia asini sunt*)."

In the same letter he instructs his agent about the disposition of various gifts to poor monasteries, people, etc. etc. He further summons him to come to Rome, apparently to explain a charge of receiving a bribe, which had been made against him. Before leaving, he tells him to give a little present (*parvum aliquid exenium*) to the recruiting officers (*scriboni*) to make them well disposed towards him, and something also, according to ancient custom, to the Prætor. He was to give these "tips" by the hand of his successor, so as to conciliate their favour towards him. One sentence in the letter is a good specimen of the way Gregory sometimes rebukes his rather hapless official by a timely sarcasm. "I have heard," he says, "that the building in the Prætorian Monastery is not yet even half completed; which being the

case, what can we praise for it but thy Experience's fervour?" The last sentence is also interesting: he bids Peter give to the Prætorian Monastery a volume of the Heptateuch out of the goods of Antoninus the Defensor, and to take the rest of his books to Rome with him.[1]

In another letter to the same correspondent he tells him how for some years there had been complaints about the way that the representatives of the Church had invaded the boundaries of other owners, and taken their slaves and moveables without any judicial process. He bids him cure this, and take care that no *tituli* were wrongfully attached to any urban or rural farm.[2] *Titulum imponere* was the act of posting up a written claim to property. He ends this letter by saying that it had been customary for bishops to pay a complimentary visit to Rome on the Pope's birthday. Gregory objected to this flattery, and, if they had to go thither, preferred they should do so on St. Peter's natal day, by whose bounty they were pastors (*ut ei cujus largitate pastores sunt, gratiarum actiones solvant*).[3]

The Pope does not mince his phrases in speaking to his careless agent Peter. Thus he says: "We thank thy Solicitude for that, after we had informed thee in the business of our brother to send him back his money, thou hast consigned the matter to oblivion as if something had been said to thee by the least of thy slaves. But now let even thy Negligence

[1] *E. and H.* ii. 38; Barmby, ii. 32.
[2] *E. and H.* i. 39*a*. [3] *Ib.* i. 39*a*; Barmby, i. 36.

—I cannot say thy Experience—study to get this done." And he concludes the letter: "Read all these things over carefully, and put aside all that familiar negligence of thine. My writings which I have sent to the peasants, do thou cause to be read over throughout all the estates, that they may know in what points to defend themselves under our authority against acts of wrong, and let either the originals or copies be given to them. See that thou observest everything without abatement, for with regard to what I have written to thee for the observance of justice, I am absolved; and, if thou art negligent, thou art guilty. . . . Thou hast heard what I wish to be done, see that thou do it."

In all this we see something more than the monk and Pope: we see the trained Roman official, the upright prefect of former days. What strikes one, perhaps, most, is how much of the administration of justice had passed out of the hands of the regular courts, and how much better off the tenants of the Church must have been than other people. The Pope kept a strict watch himself over the whole administration. His special attestation was required in various kinds of documents relating to his metropolitan province, as in authorising "the consecration of churches, oratories and monasteries, the deposition of relics, the rebuilding of churches burnt by fire, the erection of episcopal residences, the use of baptisteries, the wearing of the pallium, the unification of churches," etc.[1]

[1] Dudden, i. 387.

John the Deacon describes in some detail the way in which the great income of the papal estates, which were managed in such a businesslike fashion, was dispensed. The whole income of the property was duly entered up in a great ledger, which had been instituted by Pope Gelasius, and was thence called *Gelasii polyptycon.* Having summoned the various Church officials, and those of the palaces, monasteries, lesser churches, cemeteries, deaconries, and guest-houses within and without the walls, each was given the number of solidi to which he was entitled, according to the ledger. These gifts were distributed four times a year—namely, at Easter, at the Feast of the Apostles (29th June), on St. Andrew's Day (30th November), and on Gregory's own fête day (3rd September). Very early on Easter Day, Gregory used to sit in the Basilica of St. Vigilius, near which he lived, to exchange the kiss of peace with the bishops, priests, and deacons, etc., when it was his habit to give each of them a gold piece; while on the Feast of the Apostles and on the anniversary of his own consecration he gave them some money and dresses made of foreign material.

On the first day of each month doles were given to the poor, consisting of wine, cheese, vegetables, bacon, meat, flesh, and oil, according to the season, while gifts of paints and other foreign products were given to the more well-to-do people. Every day, again, he entertained twelve strangers at his table, and he used to send cooked meats by his messengers to the sick and infirm poor, while to the

impoverished of higher rank he sent a dish from his own table before he himself sat down to dine.[1] With the gift he generally sent a message always marked by the Pope's tender consideration for the feelings of the impoverished man. One of his letters to Theotisca, the sister of the Emperor Maurice, illustrates another phase of his eleemosynary work. He tells her how the city of Crotona on the Adriatic had the year before been sacked by the Lombards, and many captives—men, women, and children—had been made, only some of whom had been redeemed, since the captors demanded a large ransom. He had devoted one half of the gift she had sent him to their redemption. With the other half he had purchased bedclothes for the handmaids of God, "whom you call *monastriae*" (in Latin *sanctimoniales*), "inasmuch as they suffered from the bareness of their beds during the great cold of winter." Of these he said there were then, according to the official list, 33,000 in Rome, who received eighty pounds annually from the possessions of St. Peter, which he says was very little for so many. He claims that their tears and austerities had preserved the people of Rome for many years from the hands of the Lombards.[2] The official list above named was doubtless the so-called *Pergrande Volumen* mentioned by John the Deacon as preserved at the Lateran, and containing a list of all the people in Rome and the suburbs and other towns, with details about their sex, age, and profes-

[1] John the Deacon, ii. 24–28.
[2] *E. and H.* vii. 23.

sion, and the payments they were entitled to receive.[1] Thus elaborately were the systematic alms, so distasteful to modern political economy, provided for by the large-hearted if not too prudent Pope. His biographer Paul tells us how he looked after the division of the Church's revenue among the fourfold objects to which it was assigned,—the Bishop, the Clergy, the fabrics and services of the Church, and the poor. He had a list of the deserving poor prepared, who were to share his charity. While he organised a great system of methodical charity, he also dispensed large sums in individual gifts to those he deemed deserving. Those in need found him a ready helper, perhaps a too ready helper; doles of beans, wheat, wine, or gold pieces were given unstintingly wherever he heard of deserving people. To a bishop named Ecclesius, who complained that he was suffering from cold in the winter, he sent a cloak with a double nape (*Transmissimus amphiballam tunicam*).[2] To Eulogius, the Patriarch of Alexandria, he sends six of the small palls called *aquitanian*, and one or two napkins.[3] With a letter to Theodorus the physician he sends a duck and two ducklings, "that when he looked upon them he might think of himself."[4] Again, in a letter to the Lombard queen, Theodelinda, he tells her he is sending a phylacta (*i.e.* a cross with some wood from the Cross of Christ inserted), and a lection of the holy gospel enclosed in a Persian case for her son Advald, who

[1] *Op. cit.* ii. 30.
[2] *E. and H.* xiv. 15.
[3] *Ib.* vii. 40.
[4] *Ib.* iv. 32.

became king of the Lombards in 616 A.D., and three rings, two of them with hyacinths (*cum iacinthis*), and the third with an *albula* (?) for her daughter.[1] A certain Marcellus doing penance at Palermo was supplied with food, clothes, and bedding for himself and his servant.[2] The recipients of his charity were very various: *e.g.* a former Istrian schismatic, three Jewish converts, a decayed provincial governor who was in great poverty, an old blind serf of the Church, and some nuns at Nola so poor that they could not buy food or clothes, etc. Three sons of a *defensor* who had died in debt to the Church had their father's property restored to them. A tenant of the Church who had suffered losses had half his rent remitted. To a certain *consiliarius* who had no servants he presented a Sicilian slave. Argentius, a *colonus* of the Church, was given a property in order that he might exercise his accustomed hospitality *curam hospitalitatis habere*. He was also lavish in other ways. To Peter, an abbot of St. Peter's on the island of Eumorphiana, he gave 1500 pounds of lead for building purposes; estates in Rome were given to two nunneries, and 3000 nuns were supported by the Church. To celebrate the dedication of an oratory at Palermo he gave 10 gold *solidi*, 30 *amphorae* of wine, 200 loaves, 2 *orcae* of oil, 12 wethers and 100 hens. He founded a guest-house at Jerusalem, and sent 15 cloaks, 30 blankets and 15 beds to the monks of Mount Sinai; while he made over 10 mares and a stallion to

[1] *E. and H.* xiv. 12. [2] *Ib.* i. 18.

a hospice in Sicily, and sent 160 *solidi* to purchase baptismal robes for converted Jews, etc. etc.[1]

We can understand what an increasing number of applicants there would be for the contents of a purse which never seemed exhausted, and how often indiscriminate alms demoralised large numbers of people.

We can hardly realise, perhaps, the difficulty of providing for the poor in Rome caused by the destruction and emigration of the richer citizens, who had dispensed large sums in eleemosynary work in the city. The Church now undertook this work, which was well organised. In each of the seven ecclesiastical districts of Rome was a *Diaconia*, or deaconry, under a deacon, whose accounts had a special administrator. In these the poor, old, and destitute were supplied with food. Various *Xenodochia*, or guest-houses for strangers, existed in Rome, where the poor could be housed. Corn, again, was publicly distributed in the monasteries and basilicas.[2] John the Deacon tells us that Gregory also sent the Abbot Probus to found a guest-house at Jerusalem.[3]

The heaviest administrative load he had to bear was, however, seeing that Rome itself was regularly and duly provided with sufficient corn to avoid famines, which meant vigilance in collecting, storing, and shipping it from Sicily and Africa. A certain amount of the corn required was supplied

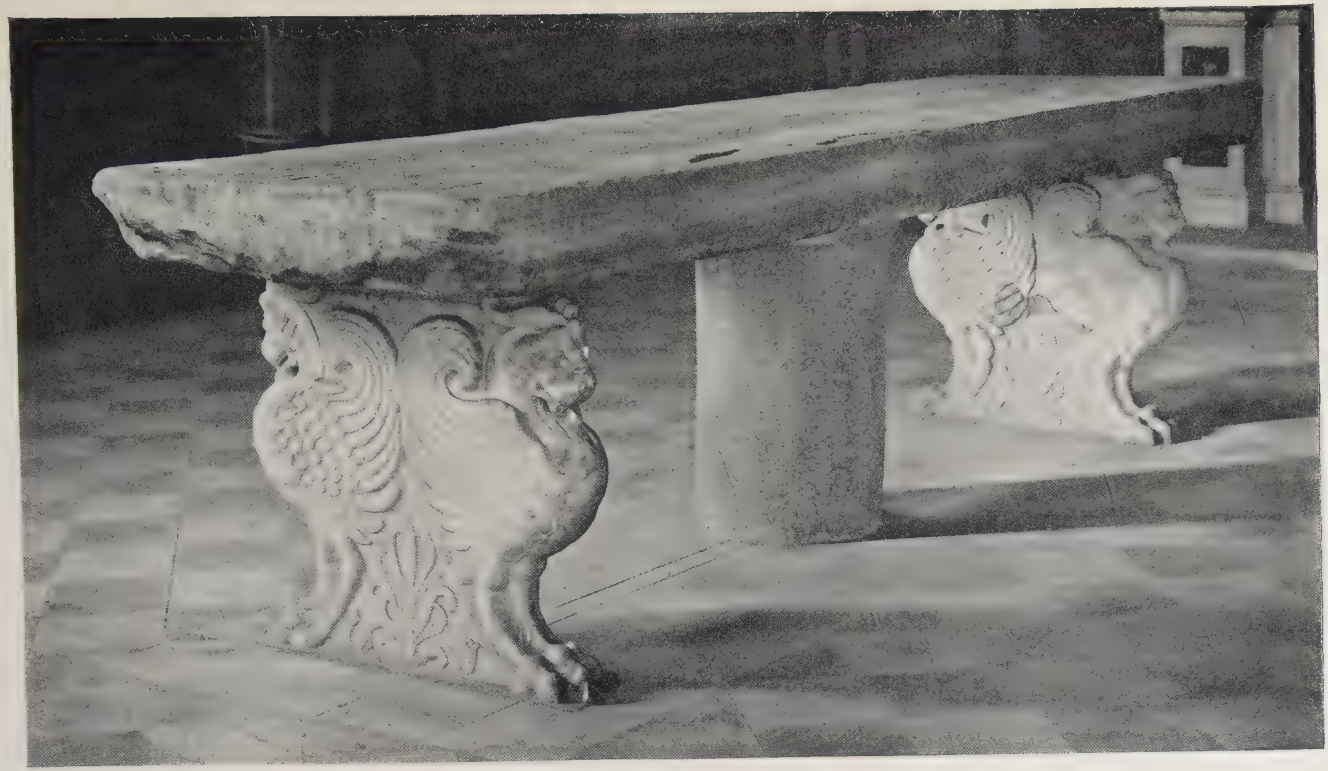
[1] *E. and H. pass.*; Dudden, i. 317, 318.
[2] Dudden, i. 247.
[3] Lib. ii. 52.

by the State, but the greater part came from the Papal patrimony and was stored in the Papal granaries, which he took care were always replenished. In a letter to his agent Peter he says there was danger of a famine at Rome; he bids him get from the dealers corn of the year's growth to the value of fifty pounds of gold, and to lay it up in Sicily in places where it would not rot, so that in February it would be ready to be transported on the ships which he would send for the purpose; and in case there should be a delay in sending the latter, he was himself to charter some ships for the purpose. The corn thus stored was not to interfere with that which it was customary to send to Rome in September and October. It would further seem that the ships belonged to the State, but a certain number of them had been assigned to the Pope for this transport.[1]

It was not only for the portage of corn that ships were employed by the Pope.

Egypt, which was so fertile in other ways, did not produce timber trees, and we find Gregory writing to Eulogius, the Patriarch of Alexandria, saying he wished to send him some timber of larger size, but no ship went thence to Italy capable of carrying it, and he was ashamed to send the smaller kinds.[2] The large timber, it would seem, was to be used for masts and rudders (*arbores ac turiones*).[3] As Eulogius seems to have complained in a second letter of some wood the Pope had sent having been

[1] *E. and H.* i. 70. [2] *Ib.* vii. 2. [3] *Ib.* xiii. 45.



ST. GREGORY'S TABLE, AT WHICH HE USED TO FEED TWELVE POOR MEN (WEEKLY NOW), IN THE CHAPEL OF STA. BARBARA AT ST. GREGORIO.

To face p. 202.

too short, he again explains that this was because there were no available ships of sufficient size. Eulogius wished to pay for the timber, but this the Pope would not hear of. He said he could not charge for what had cost him nothing. He adds that he had sent him some more short timber through the ship-master (*nauclerium*), and would send larger pieces the following year.[1]

Such is an epitome of the Pope's arrangements for the management of the great estates of the Church and for dealing with their income. It will be conceded that this part of his work was done with eminent business skill, and he, no doubt, put its finances on a sound basis. What he could not secure was that future popes should have his training as a lawyer and man of affairs, and that the personnel of the great establishment should always secure a suitably vigilant supervision.

[1] *E. and H.* viii. 28 ; Barmby, viii. 29.

CHAPTER VII

Let us now turn from Gregory the Pope, the administrator, politician, and man of affairs, to Gregory the ecclesiastic and theologian. The *Liber Pontificalis*, which records so many monuments the handiwork of other popes, has little to say of those of Gregory. It does not mention a single church built by him, and only refers to one among those which he reconsecrated, namely, the Arian Church built by the Goth Ricimer styled *Magister utriusque Militiae*. Gregory rededicated it to St. Agatha, his favourite saint, probably because she was a Sicilian. He inscribed her name, according to Aldhelm,[1] in the Canon of the Mass. The church is still known as St. Agatha dei Gothi, and is attached to the Irish College. It was reconsecrated in 591 or 592, and Gregory tells us in his *Dialogues* (iii. 30) the prodigies that then occurred. He there relates that this church, which he calls St. Agatha in Suburra, had long been closed. The Pope went to reopen it with the relics of St. Stephen and St. Agatha, and a great crowd of people. The church being full, a hog was noticed at the performance of

[1] *De Virgin.*, ch. 42.

Mass running about among the legs of the congregation, and then rushing for the door. This, he gravely assures us, was the unclean spirit which had previously possessed the place. The next two nights a tremendous noise was heard in the roof of the church, which then ceased for ever. This, he tells us, was the old enemy taking his final departure. A few days later, on a clear day, a beautiful scented cloud came down from the sky and settled on the altar, covering it like a canopy, which was seen by the serving priest and others. The lamps at the same altar were also accustomed to relight themselves after they were put out.

Gregory made this, one of the Diaconal churches of Rome, where grain and other provisions were distributed from the public granaries (*horrea*). In rededicating the church, says Duchesne, Gregory preserved the decorations of the building, the walls of which were covered with a marqueterie of marbles, and the apse was occupied with a mosaic which was destroyed in 1589, but of which a copy exists in MS. Vat. 5407. It represented Christ seated on a terrestrial globe surrounded by the twelve apostles. Below the figure of Christ were the words, "*Salus totius generis humani.*" An inscription seen by Baronius recorded the building of the church by Ricimer, who was consul 459–472.[1] In the nave are still twelve of the original columns of very rare reddish-yellow granite, with Ionic capitals, taken from some ancient building.

[1] See *Lib. Pont. Greg. I.*, ed. Duchesne, notes.

Paul the Deacon says: "Other Pontiffs gave themselves up to building churches and adorning them with gold and silver; but Gregory, while not entirely neglecting this duty, was wholly engrossed in gaining souls, and all the money he could lay his hands upon he was anxious to bestow upon the poor."[1]

If Gregory was not given to building churches, he looked after their repairs. ("*Omni vitae suae temporae sicut novas basilicas minime fabricaret, ita nimirum fabricatarum veterum sarta tecta cum summo studio annualiter reparabat.*"[2]) On the other hand, the Pope was very businesslike in insisting on proper provision for the upkeep of churches before he would allow them to be consecrated. Thus, in one case, Januarius, a deacon of Messina, wishing to found a basilica, the Pope ordered the bishop to see to it that no bodies were buried there, that an endowment of at least ten *solidi* a year should be carefully secured, and that it should suffice after the donor's death for the repair of the building, the supply of lights, and the support of the officiating clergy. The deed was also to contain an express clause providing that the founder had renounced all interest in the church save the common one of worshipping there, and that he had provided the necessary relics to put into the foundations. Although we do not read of his building churches, we find him conveying lands to the basilica of St. Paul to maintain lights there in honour of the Apostle. This was recorded in an

[1] *Vit.* 16.

[2] John the Deacon, *Vit.* iv. 68.

inscription still extant in that church.[1] As Mr. Dudden says, the custom of burning lights at the shrines of saints and martyrs, which was defended by St. Jerome, had become general at this time.[2] The *Liber Pontificalis* tells us he built a ciborium or baldacchino (*fastigium*) with its four columns of pure silver for the altar of St. Peter's. He also made a covering or veil for the Apostle's shrine, ornamented with the purest gold and weighing 100 lb. The ciborium was removed to St. Maria Maggiore by Leo the Third. Gregory built a second one in the basilica of St. Paul.[3]

He held two ordinations annually, one at Quadragesima, and the other in the seventh month. Altogether, during his Pontificate, he ordained thirty-nine priests and five deacons, and consecrated sixty-two bishops.[4] He was a strict adherent himself of the practice of saying mass daily and pressed it upon others, and made special provision for daily masses in the churches of St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Pancras.

The alterations made in the Roman Liturgy by Gregory have been much illuminated lately by the

[1] This gift, which was apparently from his own private property, and which, if he had been a monk, he must long before have surrendered, he describes as the farm (*massa*), called Aqua Salvias, with all its dependencies, the vineyard (*cella vinaria*) Antoniano, the Villas Pertusa, Bifurco, Primiano, Cassiano, Silonis, Corneli, Tessellata, and Corneliano, with all the appurtenant rights, implements, etc., together with two gardens situated on the Tiber between the river and *the Porticus* of the Church of St. Paul, and two small closes (*terrulas*) called Fossa latronis (*E. and H.* xiv. 14).

[2] *Op. cit.* i. 260, note 1.

[3] Joh. Diac. *Vit. Greg.* iv. 68.

[4] *Lib. Pont. sub. nom. Greg.*

researches of M. Duchesne and Mr. Dudden, whose conclusions seem incontrovertible. They were partially based on the practice he had noticed when at Constantinople. This he doubtless thought an improvement on that then used in Italy, which was contained in the Sacramentary of Gelasius. This was not to the taste of some, who complained that it meant making the Church of Rome subservient to that of Constantinople. In a letter to John, Bishop of Syracuse, written in October 598, he refers to these complaints. The usages in question, he says, were chiefly that he had caused the Alleluia to be said at Mass out of the season of Pentecost (*extra pentecosten tempora*); second, that he had provided for the subdeacon to proceed to the altar unvested; and third, that the Lord's Prayer and the Kyrie Eleison were to be said immediately after the Canon, and before the breaking of the bread instead of after. He replied that in reference to the more frequent singing of the Alleluia, it had been an ancient Roman practice, derived from the Church of Jerusalem by the tradition of St. Jerome and Pope Damasus. In regard to the subdeacons, the practice he followed was the old one which had been displaced by one of their pontiffs in favour of their wearing linen tunics. In regard to the Kyrie Eleison, he denied that his practice was that of the Greeks, for they said it all together, while at Rome it was said by the clerks and responded to by the people. Christe Eleison was also always said at Rome, which was not the practice of the Greeks,

In regard to altering the place of the prayer in the Mass, he said it was his own doing and not derived from the Greeks, as he deemed it more proper that "the prayer which our Redeemer composed over his Body and Blood should be said directly over the oblation, as was the custom of the Apostles." Again, as to the Lord's Prayer, he said the Greeks repeated it all together, while with themselves it was said by the priest alone. He claimed, therefore, that instead of always following the Greeks he had himself amended their old usages, or appointed new and more profitable ones. He concludes the letter with the words: "Who can doubt that the Church of Constantinople is subordinate to the Apostolic See? It is constantly admitted by our Lord the Emperor, and by my brother, the Bishop of that city. But am I on that account to reject what there is of good in that Church? As it is my duty to correct my inferiors when they err, so am I ready to imitate them when they do well. It is folly to refuse to learn what is good because I think myself superior."[1] "The repeating of the Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison at the beginning of Mass," says Mr. Dudden, "had been adopted at Rome as early as 529, and was not an introduction of Gregory's. This we gather from a Canon of the Council of Vaison."[2] In addition to the changes here referred to, the *Liber Pontificalis* (from which it was doubtless taken by Bede) tells us he also added certain words to the prayer, *Hanc igitur oblationem*, in the Canon

[1] *E. and H.* ix. 26; Barmby, ix. 12. [2] *Op. cit.* i. 266.

of the Mass, namely, *diesque nostros in tua pace disponas atque ab æterna damnatione nos eripi et in electorum tuorum jubeas grege numerari.*[1]

These changes, together with that referred to in a previous chapter as enacted by the Synod of 595, about the singing of parts of the Mass by the deacons, comprise all the changes in the Liturgy we can attribute with probability to Gregory, and there is no real foundation for the notion that he entirely reformed it, as John the Deacon and other later writers affirm.[2] Duchesne has shown that the Sacramentary which passed under the name of Gregory was, in fact, "a Pope's book," *i.e.* a book containing the prayers used by the Pope when presiding over ceremonies. He concludes that a number of services in it are clearly later than the time of Gregory. Notably, as was remarked long ago, the so-called "Mass of St. Gregory," for he could not have mentioned his own festival. The book no doubt contains a number of prayers in use in St. Gregory's time and earlier, but in the form in which we have it, it doubtless dates from the time of Pope Hadrian the First.[3] As is well known, during Lent, except on Saturdays and Sundays, the Mass, properly so called, which would be then inappropriate, is not celebrated in Roman Catholic churches, and there is substituted for it the Liturgy of the præsanctified. This, says M. Duchesne, has come to

[1] *Lib. Pont.*, Greg., *Bede*, ii. 1 ; *E. and H.* ii. 1.
[2] See the question discussed by Mr. Dudden, i. 267–271.
[3] Duchesne, *op. cit.* 123.

be attributed to St. Gregory, for what reason is not known.[1] A special service of some importance was perhaps first introduced by St. Gregory, at least (as Duchesne says) the most ancient notice of it was contained in his Register, and was doubtless first used in the year 598. This is the annual litany (a word originally meaning a procession) which took place on the 25th of April, the same date as the Pagan festival of the *Robigalia*. It used to set out from the Church of St. Lawrence in Lucina; a station was then held at that of St. Valentine outside the walls, another at the Milvian bridge, with its last halt in the atrium or paradise of St. Peter's, the service concluding in the Basilica itself.[2]

There is a greater difficulty in deciding the exact connection of Pope Gregory with the so-called *Cantus Gregorianus* or Gregorian Music. I shall turn for guidance in this very technical matter to the latest authorities. The Rev. W. H. Frere says: "Plain song (*Cantus Planus*) is the name now given to the style of unisonous ecclesiastical art-music which arose before the development of harmony. In its earliest days it was called by more general names, such as *musica*, *cantilena*, or *cantus*; but when harmony arose and brought with it measured music (*musica mensurata* or *mensurabilis*) with a definite system of tune values, a distinguishing name was required, and *cantus planus* was adopted in order to emphasize the fact that the older music differed from the newer in having no

[1] Duchesne, *op. cit.* 272. [2] *Ib.* 288.

definite tone values. . . . The synagogue music of the pre-Christian era was probably of the same character, and the traditional music of the synagogue of to-day is in fact very characteristic of the style. The history of Latin plain song represents the evolution of melody from the artistic point of view."[1]

Substantially, according to Mr. W. S. Rockstro, it may be traced back to the Greeks. The early Roman church music, he says, "was pre-eminently Greek in character and personnel, therefore its church music was not different in this respect from the Roman secular music, which clung closely to the Greek tradition. . . . Even when Greek ceased to be the liturgial language of the Roman church, there is no reason to think that any break came in the continuity of the Greek tradition so far as the music was concerned."[2]

It developed, however, greatly among the Latins. This was in the main along three lines, forming what Mr. Frere calls three dialects or styles. The Ambrosian used in the diocese of Milan, the Mozarabic in Spain, and thirdly, the so-called Gregorian, the last of which developed especially in Rome, and presently spread over Gaul, Africa, and the Celtic lands, probably supplanting earlier styles there.

The name Gregorian which attaches to this latter class, points to some influential personage

[1] Article "Plain Song," *Dict. of Music*, vol. iii. 760.
[2] *Ib.* vol. ii. 224, article "Modes."

called Gregory as connected with it, and this personage has generally been deemed to have been Pope Gregory the First.

"The whole tendency of modern inquiries," says Mr. Frere, "has been to show that St. Gregory had a personal share, to say the least, in the arrangement of the collection." He admits that this conclusion has on several occasions been seriously questioned, "but," he continues, "fresh researches have shown that the collection attained a final form shortly after St. Gregory's death, and was thereafter considered as closed. Moreover, a comparison of Gregorian and Ambrosian versions of the same melody show that a skilful hand had done in the former case exactly the sort of editing which is ascribed to St. Gregory. It may therefore be concluded that the Gregorian music of the Mass comes from St. Gregory's hand practically unaltered."[1]

Mr. Rockstro argues in the same way. He says: "There are many lines of evidence that converge to show that the main bulk and nucleus of this music is to be dated as belonging to the fifth and sixth centuries. A persistent tradition ascribes the final regulation of it to St. Gregory (590–604). The festivals and other occasions for which the music was written are as a rule earlier than his date, and the festivals of later origin differ markedly from the pre-Gregorian festivals in having borrowed, instead of original music provided for them; this is especially the case in the Mass. Further, the text

[1] *Dict. of Music*, vol. ii. 255, article "Gregorian Music."

of the Latin Bible employed is an ancient one, that was for most purposes superseded in the fifth and sixth centuries."[1] This does not mean that Gregory was the inventor of the so-called Gregorian music, but only that he was the person who gave it its final form.

During the two centuries before his time, the more primitive form of the Plain Chant was in vogue which was associated with the name of Ambrose. It is generally supposed that in this Ambrosian style four "modes" or scales were alone in use, in which every plain chant was then written, those beginning and ending respectively on the notes now called D, E, F, and G, and which were respectively known as the Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and Mixolydian. These were afterwards known as "the four authentic modes."

Presently four other modes were introduced which were known as "plagal," and directly derived from the former, and which were respectively named Hypodorian, Hypophrygian, Hypolydian, and Hypomixolydian.[2] The introduction of these new modes was the special feature which Gregory is supposed to have added to the plain chant, but it is clear that the whole of these eight modes were known long before his day and in use at Rome. "It is in fact impossible to trace back the eight familiar forms to the time of their first adoption into the services of the church."[3]

As we have said, it is probable that Gregory gave

[1] *Dict. of Music*, iii. 226, article "Modes, Ecclesiastical."
[2] *Op. cit.* ii. 760, Rockstro, *Plagal Modes.* [3] *Ib.* ii. 766.

them their final forms, and in all probability drew on his long experience at Constantinople for the materials of his reform. The amount of Gregory's modifications it is not possible with our present knowledge to discriminate. What we can affirm as virtually certain is that a large part of the music known specifically as Gregorian was current at Rome long before Gregory's day.

It will be well to realise a little more closely what it consisted in, since it was this Gregorian plain song that was imported into England by Augustine and flourished so much here. "In the earliest Christian days the psalms were recited by a single soloist, who monotoned the greater part of the psalm, but inserted various cadences or inflexions at certain points of distinction in the services. This was probably but the carrying out of what had long been current in the synagogue."[1]

Presently it became customary for the congregation to interject some small "response" at the close of each verse, such as "Amen" or Alleluja, or "For His mercy endureth for ever." Later the process was elaborated, and became more like a modern litany. Later again the part of the congregation was largely taken by a body of trained singers forming a choir, which encroached more and more upon the former duties of the soloist, and the choral melody called the "respond" was developed.[2]

The chief ancient pieces in the Graduale (or music book for the Mass) are, the introit at the

[1] *Dict. of Music*, iv. 73, Frere, "Responsive Psalmody." [2] *Ib.*

beginning of the service; the graduale with Alleluja, *i.e.* the tract preceding the Gospel; the offertory which accompanies the preparation of the oblations, and the communion which accompanies the taking of the sacrament. This music, according to Mr. Frere, belongs exclusively to the fifth or sixth centuries.

The responsive psalmody just described was from early times supplemented in the East by another form known as antiphonal, in which the singing of the *psalter* was done by two alternating choirs, and the refrain, instead of being a mere brief tag, was a definite melody. From the East it spread to the West, and was patronised by St. Ambrose of Milan. The "Hours" were thus sung by monks and canons, the occupants of the stalls on each side of the choir singing the verses alternately. In other places the antiphonal singing took place between two choirs alternately, and properly speaking by men's voices alternating with women's or boys' voices.[1] The music book for the Mass was originally called Cantatorium, and afterwards Graduale or Grayle, while the music book for the "Hours" was known as the antiphonarium.[2]

It is not improbable that, like Leo XI. in our time, Gregory encouraged the use of more austere music and discouraged the lighter melodies associated with the name of St. Ambrose. A sentence in one of his letters to Desiderius, Bishop of Vienne, seems to imply this. The Ambrosian music was

[1] *Dict. of Music*, i. 92, Frere, *sub. voc.* "Antiphon." [2] *Ib.* p. 95.

also at first distasteful to the great St. Augustine, who afterwards became reconciled to it. Martene says Dr. Barmby, quotes quite an ancient writer to the effect that in the Benedictine Monastery of Monte Cassino Ambrosian music was forbidden.[1]

Gregory was credited, not only with the invention of the so-called Gregorian music, but with being the founder of the *Schola Cantorum* or Singing School at Rome, and his very inaccurate biographer, John the Deacon, says, "He built for it two habitations, one under the slopes of the Basilica of St. Peter the Apostle, and the other under the houses of the Lateran palace." It is clear that John's statement about the Pope having founded the Roman singing school, known also as the *Orphanostrophium* or orphanage, cannot be sustained. It was in existence long before his time, and was variously ascribed to Pope Hilary and Pope Sylvester, and we have no evidence of any kind, save the statement of John the Deacon, who wrote three hundred years after the Pope died, for the account. The Pope is more credibly reported to have in his leisure hours actually instructed the boys in their singing, and the whip with which he chastised them, and the antiphonary he is said to have used, were shown in later times. This is partially confirmed by Bede, who tells us that Putta, who became Bishop of Rochester, was an adept at chanting in

[1] See *Martene de Antiq. Eccles. Rit.*, vol. iii. p. 8; Barmby, *Gregory the Great*, 189, 190.

the Roman manner, which he had learned from Gregory's disciples.[1]

The ruthless critic has also disposed of Gregory's claim to the composition of several hymns, some of the most famous, indeed, in the Roman service books. "The Gregorian authorship of these compositions cannot, however, be maintained. As M. Gevaert says, '*Tout le monde sait que la liturgie locale de Rome n'admettait pas cette catégorie de chants, ni au VI^e^. siècle ni beaucoup plus tard.*'"[2]

It is not a pleasant duty to disturb and destroy the legendary embroidery which, in Pope Gregory's case as in many others, has credited the great personage with the deeds of lesser men, or even the combined work of generations of men. In his case enough and to spare remains to fully justify the title of Great, without legends that will not stand the breath of criticism.

One great reform introduced by Gregory, which still subsists, was that of the calendar. He was the first to date events by the days of the month as we do now, instead of in the ancient fashion by calends, ides, and nones.[3] He was also the first Pope to reckon by indictions (*i.e.* cycles of fifteen years), and he uses the Constantinopolitan indiction

[1] *Bede, E. and H., H.E.* iv. 2.

[2] *Les Origines du Chant Liturgique*, p. 18 ; Dudden, i. 276. In Belgium he came to be looked upon as the patron saint of schoolboys, *patronus addiscentium litteras*, and in the *Acta Sanctorum*, Jany. ii. p. 363, par. 6, we read: "Erat tunc festum Gregorii Papae, quem frater speciali affectu diligebat ; quia in ejus festo scholas ad discendum alphabetum cum aliis pueris primitus intravit." Dudden, ii. p. 271.

[3] Plummer, *Bede*, vol. ii. 153 ; quoting Ideler, ii. 191.

beginning on 1st September.[1] It was reserved for his namesake, Gregory the Thirteenth, to make the much more important rectification of the calendar which goes by his name. Gregory, among his manifold accomplishments, is said to have been a skilful scribe. Bede speaks of his having written many and large books, notwithstanding his continual bad health.[2] His successor, Innocent III., is said to have sent a whole Bible written by him to the Bishop of Livonia in 1203: *Papa Innocentius . . . Bibliotecam beati Gregorii manuscriptam episcopo Lyvoniensi mittit.*[3]

Gregory deemed the capacity for teaching, and especially that of preaching, a bishop's most important endowment, and in this respect he set others a fine example, for he was essentially a great preacher. It is noticeable that among the earlier Popes the only ones whose sermons are preserved were St. Leo and St. Gregory himself. Certain churches and the cemeteries where the martyrs had been buried were selected as preaching places by the latter and called stations (*stationes*). On the great festivals, when crowds might be expected, the great basilicas were so used; on the festivals of the lesser saints the stations were fixed at one or other of the churches dedicated to the particular saint. "The Pope arrived on horseback, escorted by his deacons and the high officials of the palace; he was received

[1] Bright, 48, note 5; quoting *Bened. Edd. in Ep.* i. 1; Jaffé, R. P., pp. 93 ff.; Plummer, *op. cit.* vol. ii. 39, note.

[2] *E. and H., H.E.* ii. 1.

[3] See Pertz, xxiii. 247.

in state, and from the *sacrarium* proceeded to his throne behind the altar. As he passed up the nave seven candlesticks were borne before him, incense was burnt, and a psalm was chanted by the choir. Mass was then celebrated, and a sermon delivered. During the preaching of the sermon the Pope remained seated on a marble chair. Sometimes he recited them himself, and sometimes when unwell they were dictated to notaries. They were afterwards revised and published, and a standard text was deposited in the Papal archives. Forty of these sermons are extant, nine preached at St. Peter's, six or seven at St. John Lateran, four at St. Laurence, two each at St. Maria Maggiore, St. Agnes and St. Clement's, and one each at St. Paul-without-the-Walls, St. Felicitas, St. Stephen, St. Andrew, SS. Marcellinus and Petrus, St. Sylvester, St. Felix, St. Pancratius, SS. Nereus and Achilla, SS. Procopius and Martinianus, SS. John and Paul, St. Menas, SS. Philip and James, and St. Sebastian."[1]

Gregory's sermons were plain and simple, popular and practical, and he seldom discussed dogmas. They abound in parables and allegories, anecdotes, stories of the saints, of visions, and of encounters with angels and demons, in which the Pope fully believed: but the truth of the occurrences was quite of secondary importance to its edification, etc. etc. He also delighted in mystical interpretations, which he found lurking in the most matter-of-fact phrases in Scripture, and which were often far-fetched. He

[1] John the Deacon, ii. 18; iv. 74.

quotes Scripture profusely and generally very aptly, had an extraordinary knowledge of all its parts, and was the first to experiment in anything like a systematic way in the use of illustrations drawn from other than scriptural sources, and he dots epigrams about his paragraphs like bits of stained glass in an old window. Contrasting the methods of preaching to the wise and the simple, he tells us the former were for the most part converted by argument and reasoning, the latter better by examples.[1] His most famous collection of sermons, known as the *Magna Moralia*, which he carefully revised, was that devoted to the Book of Job. "Of ancient or oriental manners he knew nothing, nor did he look upon the book as a poem. To him it was pure unimaginative unembellished history, which he interpreted allegorically." From this famous book the Irish called him Gregory of the *Moralia*.[2] Besides this and his forty homilies on the Gospels, he composed twenty others on Ezekiel, in which his mystical and allegorical tendency had full play.

He showed great good sense in moderating the fanaticism and extravagance which is a common product of the ascetic life. Extreme sabbatarian views then prevailed, notably in Gaul, and among "the Celts" (*i.e.* of Britain), among whom any kind of work was strictly forbidden on Sunday, even washing the person as well as the face and combing the hair. Referring to this subject the wise

[1] *Pastoral Care*, iii. 6.

[2] See Plummer, *Bede*, vol. ii. 70.

Pope, addressing the Roman citizens, bids them not be deluded by these extravagant theories. "If any one," he says, "craves to wash for mere luxury and pleasure, we do not allow it on other days than Sunday, but if for bodily need we do not forbid it, even on the Lord's day. . . . If it is a sin to wash the body on the Lord's day, why is it not a sin to wash the face on the same day?"[1]

Gregory was a devoted believer in the miraculous virtues of relics, "which had been much encouraged by the great Church leaders, such as Basil and Chrysostom in the East, and Ambrose and Augustine in the West."

It is really incredible how, with the decay of criticism and real knowledge, this cult spread all over the Christian world. There was no pretence or mistake about its meaning. At first, perhaps, it represented a not unnatural desire to possess some object reminiscent of a person whose life had been exemplary, or who had done conspicuous service to the Church or otherwise, and who had been given the ambiguous style of a saint, which was in many cases confirmed by the Church authorities. It was not, however, possible to restrain the imagination and fervour of the devout to this very innocent form of respect. It speedily resulted in the idea everywhere rampant, that there was a much greater virtue in these remains than the fact that they might be means by which the example and teaching of saintly men could be cherished and their memories

[1] *E. and H.* xiii. 3.

kept green by having scraps of their bones or old clothes close at hand. The quite materialistic and magical notion which doubtless had a pagan origin was everywhere spread about among both clerics and lay folk, that these objects had special virtues in themselves by which men could with their help be cured of diseases, or rid themselves of mental or bodily distress, or secure protection against the devil and all his hosts or the machinations of wicked men and women.

The temptation was the greater because it was so easy to summon poetry and imagination in favour of the view, and it seemed to create a direct tie between the living and the dead which looked very close, however factitious. Thus it came about that the place where the dead saint lay was supposed to have a suffused light hanging over it, that the soil in which he or she was buried was said to be fragrant with sweet odours, and the remains themselves were reported to be the cause of many miracles, and were accordingly the trysting-places of pilgrimages and processions in which thousands of poor people joined, with a full faith that they or those dear to them would be thus healed of their complaints, or protected against temporal dangers and spiritual enemies.

Mr. Dudden has collected from the works of Gregory of Tours a very instructive list of relics at this time venerated in France which I will quote. "Here," he says, "among the rest we find mentioned the holy spear, the crown of thorns (which

kept miraculously green), the pillar of the scourging, and the seamless coat, which was enclosed in a chest in a very secret crypt of a basilica in a place called Galathea. Here also we read of relics of St. Andrew preserved at Neuvy near Tours, blood of St. Stephen in an altar at Bordeaux, some drops of sea-water which had fallen from the robes of the proto-martyr, when he was seen in a vision after succouring a ship in distress, and a shoe of the martyr Epipodius." Further, it was thought and believed that the miraculous powers of the saint might be manifested not only through his actual relics, but also through objects which had been associated therewith, such as dust from his tomb, oil from the lamps that burnt in front of it, and rags of cloth (*brandea*) which had been placed on the sarcophagus. These objects as well as the original relics were deposited in reliquaries (*sanctuaria*) and preserved in churches either underneath or within or behind the altar; sometimes they were borne in solemn procession, occasionally they were worn by private individuals about their persons. In the sixth century they were regarded as necessary for the consecration of churches, and frequently in the case of old churches which had not been dedicated in this way, the omission was supplied.[1]

A very large proportion of these relics were sophistications, and it is virtually certain that all the very old ones were. As is quite well known, they were duplicated and triplicated and multiplied, so

[1] Dudden, . pp. 277, 278.

that almost every saint must have had several heads and a great number of limbs, while the relics of their clothing and other surroundings prove them to have had outrageous wardrobes, and as having been anything but ascetics. Churches and monasteries, to the great scandal of the pious, have had fierce polemics about their respective claims to particular relics of their cherished saint, who has been something more than a mere patron to them, namely, an attractive bait for pilgrimages and processions. A huge trade in spurious relics arose in very early times, and went on right through the Middle Ages, especially in the days of the Crusaders, greatly to the profit of the Jews and Levantine Greeks who trafficked in them. This nefarious trade has come down to our own days.[1]

The most famous of all the relics existing in Gregory's time were the alleged bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul preserved at Rome, about which he in one of his letters gives a wonderful account, proving better than any mere criticism the extraordinary superstition which (in the case of the Pope) was consistent with so many high qualities.

In a letter written by Gregory to Constantina

[1] It will be remembered that not many years ago, when Cardinal Vaughan claimed to have secured the remains of St. Edmund for the consecration of his great cathedral, other claimants to the possession of the relic arose, and the Cardinal, who utterly failed to substantiate the pedigree of his treasure, confessed that it was indifferent whether the relics were genuine or not; so long as the faithful believed in their genuineness their virtue remained. Whatever the virtue of this apology, it has the advantage of justifying those who see no absurdity in the cult of the multiplied heads of the same saint in various churches.

Augusta, the wife of the Emperor Maurice, who had asked him to send her the head or some other part of the body of St. Paul for the church then being built in his honour in the palace, he replied that he neither could nor dared, since the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul in their churches were so endowed with miraculous and terrible powers that it was not possible to pray there without fear, and when his predecessor wished to change the silver canopy or covering of St. Peter's body, although it was fifteen feet away, a dreadful portent occurred. In his own time, in making some repairs near the sepulchre of St. Paul, the workman in digging disturbed some bones which were unconnected with the tomb, but as he presumed to lift them he died suddenly. Again, when searching for the body of St. Laurence the Martyr, whose place of sepulchre was not exactly known, they came upon the tomb. Although the monks and sacristans who were at work did not venture to touch it, they all died within ten days. Gregory then goes on to say that it was not the custom of the Romans, when they gave relics of the saints, to presume to touch any parts of their bodies, but to put a cloth (*brandeum*) into a casket (*pyxis*) and to place this awhile near the body, and when taken up to remove it reverently to the church to be dedicated, when the same results followed as if part of the body itself had been put there. Some Greeks having doubted this, his predecessor, Pope Leo, had cut such a cloth with a pair of scissors, when it began to bleed!!! Thus at Rome and in all the West it was deemed sacrilegious

to touch the actual remains of the saints, and they wondered greatly at the custom of the Greeks, which was to take up the body of a saint entire. He reports a story of some Greeks who went there some two years before, and who at night dug up the bones of dead men in an open field near the Church of St. Paul. When they were arrested and asked why they did this, they replied that they were going to take them to Greece and there to pass them off as saints' bones. He said further, that on the death of the Apostles, certain men came from the East to recover their bodies as being those of their countrymen. They carried them two miles out of the city to a place called *Catacombas, i.e.* the Catacombs, and deposited them awhile, intending to remove them presently, but when they tried to do so a terrible storm of lightning and rain prevented them, and they were thereupon redeposited where they afterwards lay.

He said that, all this being so, he dared not touch nor even look at these remains, but in order to satisfy the Empress he was sending her some filings of the chains which the Apostle Peter had worn round his neck and hands and which had miraculous effects.[1] Of these filings he says that since many people went to Rome hoping to get a little portion of them, a priest attended with a file; sometimes a portion came off quickly, but at others the file was drawn a long time over the chains without anything being got.

[1] *E. and H.* iv. 30; Barmby, iv. 30.

Gregory, as we saw, brought back certain relics for his monastery when he returned from Constantinople. In one of his letters[1] he thanks John the Abbot for sending him the tunic of St. John from Syracuse. John the Deacon in his Life tells us that this tunic, which had short sleeves, was in his time preserved at St. John Lateran with a dalmatic supposed to be that of St. Paschasius.[2] Other famous relics in Rome at this time were the gridiron of St. Laurence, a piece of the Holy Cross, and various relics of John the Baptist, while a nail from the cross of St. Peter is said to have been sent by Gregory to the recluse Secundinus.[3] The chains of St. Paul and St. Peter, it was claimed, were preserved at Rome, and in two churches—one set, with apparently the older pedigree, at St. Pietro ad Vinculam, and the other in the basilica of St. Peter. The latter are often mentioned in Gregory's letters, in which they are apparently named for the first time. The Pope used to have filings from them enclosed in a small cross or a gold key, copied from that which locked St. Peter's sepulchre. These were supposed to cure the sick when put on their bodies. In sending some to Anastasius, Patriarch of Antioch, he says: *Beati Petri apostoli vobis claves transmisi, quae super egros positae multis solent miraculis coruscare.*[4] The keys, he recommended, should be hung round the neck.

The magical and prophylactic properties of such

[1] iii. 3.
[2] *Vit.*, lib. iii. ch. 57, etc. See *E. and H.*, *op. cit.* i. 161, note.
[3] Dudden, i. 278.
[4] *E. and H.* i. 25; see also *ib.* 29 and 30.

relics enter into a great many stories of miracles in this very credulous age. They were also dangerous; thus Gregory, in writing to Theoctista, tells a story of a certain Lombard who in some city beyond the Po picked up one of these golden keys of Peter. "In order to see if it was gold he took his knife out to cut it, but instead he thrust it into his own throat and died. Presently Antharith, the Lombard King, and his retinue came up, and none of them dared lift the key up. Whereupon a Lombard who was a Catholic took it up, and the King sent it to the Pope, who sent it, in turn, to the Byzantine princess."[1]

Miraculous properties were assigned to many substances. Thus in a letter of Gregory to Leontius, the ex-Consul, he thanks him for sending him "oil of the Holy Cross" and wood of aloes, one to bless by the touch and the other to give a sweet smell when burnt. Dr. Barmby tells us that in the Itinerarium of Antoninus of Placentia there are mentioned flasks (ampullæ) of onyx, containing oil which had been in contact with the wood of the true Cross, supposed to be preserved in Constantine's Church at Golgotha, and which on this contact boiled over. In later times such oil was supposed to flow from the Cross itself.[2]

Relics and similar objects were not the only materials used in the scarcely disguised magical practices of the Church at this time. Thus, sanctified water and oil and salt were all used in the sacrament of baptism, and each of them had to be

[1] *E. and H.* vii. 23. [2] *Ib.* vii. 23; Barmby, viii. 35.

deprived of the lurking demons within it by exorcism before it was used, and similarly with the sanctification of churches and graveyards, etc. These and similar notions had their real pedigree in the dim twilight of early history, and their most developed parallels in the ritual of the priests of Babylonia. The phylacteries, with their scraps from the Sacred Book, so much in vogue in the Church of the sixth century, were in essence the same as the similar magical formulæ known to nearly every old religion, and notably that of the Jews. The existence of ever-present evil spirits continually pursuing the life of man with temptations to do evil and bringing him misfortune, was a belief most vividly held at this time by all classes, and no small part of the work of the clergy was the discomfiting of his enemies by means of various exorcisms and other methods. Among these the greatest favourite was the sign of the cross, and its use is mentioned in many places in Gregory's *Dialogues*. Mr. Dudden has collected a number of instances from that work. Thus he says: "Loaves and cakes were marked with the cross. Men signed themselves when they went to sleep, ate or drank. A nun wandering in the garden of her convent plucked and ate a lettuce without first making the holy sign, and in consequence was possessed by a devil. At the exorcism which followed, the spirit cried out, 'What have I done? What have I done? I was sitting upon a lettuce and she came and ate me.' The sign of the cross was several times used in working miracles.

On one occasion holy water was employed."[1] The use of sanctified and exorcised water for aspersion, for crossing themselves on entering church, for mixing with the mortar at the sealing of the altar stones and the washing of the altar at a dedication of a church, all seem connected with the similar uses of lustral water in the pagan temples. A very elaborate service dealt with the preparation of the holy oils. It was called the Chrismal Mass, and was celebrated on Holy Thursday. At this the oil for anointing the sick and used in extreme unction was duly blessed, and was then deemed to possess special curative virtues, imparted by the breathing upon them by the priest and his making the sign of the cross over them. A sentence from one of the prayers used, will show how close akin the whole thing was to pagan magic: "*Emitte, quaesumus Domine. Spiritum sanctum Paracletum de caelis in hanc pinguedinem olei, quam de viridi ligno producere dignatus es ad refectionem mentis et corporis . . . ad evancuandos omnes dolores, omnem infirmitatem, omnem aegritudinem mentis et corporis*," etc.[2]

In many of the legendary tales which Gregory tells us in the *Dialogues*, about which he seems to have no doubts, there is a naïve childishness which seems incredible in one so endowed with practical wisdom. One or two of these stories must suffice as samples. A certain Jew was once travelling along the Appian Way from Campania to Rome. His road passed by Funda, where there dwelt a bishop

[1] Dudden, i. 353. [2] Duchesne, *op. cit.* 306.

named Andrew, who was a good and chaste man, but permitted a certain religious woman to live under his roof as a housekeeper. When the Jew drew near Funda, night was falling, and as he had nowhere to go to, he found shelter in a ruined temple of Apollo. But these shrines had a bad reputation, and therefore (although a Jew) he took the precaution of protecting himself from demons by making the sign of the cross. Even so he was too terrified to sleep. As he lay awake at midnight, he beheld a crowd of evil spirits moving before one who appeared to be their chieftain, and who took his seat within the temple. The chieftain then interrogated each of his followers as to what he had been doing in the world. One thereupon stepped forward, and said he had been tempting Bishop Andrew in regard to his housekeeper, and had succeeded so well that the Bishop had that very evening given her a playful slap. He was duly praised, and promised a reward if he completed his evil work. Then turning towards the Jew, he asked how such a person came to be there. The demons then looked at him, and were amazed to find him marked with the sign of the cross. Alas, they cried, here is an empty vessel, but yet it is signed. They therefore fled. When the Bishop heard the story he turned away his housekeeper and all the other women in his household. The Jew was converted, and the Temple of Apollo turned into a church and dedicated to St. Andrew.[1]

Let us now turn to another story in which

[1] *Dialogues*, iii. 7.

poetry and pathos have a place. A certain old Abbot of Praeneste had a protégé who was a monk in the abbey, who fell ill, and foreseeing that he would die asked leave to prepare his own sepulchre. The abbot, having also fallen ill, saw that he would die before his friend, and asked the latter to put him in the grave he had fashioned for himself. He replied that the grave was too small for two. But the abbot was importunate, and undertook there should be room. The priest presently died, and when the brethren carried him to the grave he had made for himself they found that the abbot's corpse filled the whole place. Then one of them appealed to the dead abbot to fulfil his promise that the grave should hold them both. Thereupon the latter, who lay with his face upwards, turned over on his side, and thus made room for his friend. This, we are told, was done in view of them all.[1]

Elsewhere we have stories of the influence of saintly men on animals. Thus Gregory tells of a hermit named Florentius, who one day found a bear close to his oratory after he had finished his devotions, holding its head down to the ground and showing no sign of cruelty, and he understood it to mean that it wished to do him a service. He therefore ordered it to look after four or five sheep which he owned, and it consequently used to lead them down to the field and take them back again at twelve o'clock, and when he wished to fast, it brought them later or earlier, as he wished.

[1] *Dialogues*, iii. 24.

This power of doing miracles aroused the envy of other monks, who killed the bear; upon which Florentius cursed them, and they were struck with leprosy and died.[1]

Tales of this kind abound in the *Dialogues*, and some of them, as told by the Pope, are sometimes fantastic beyond description: thus he tells us in the gravest way that Fortunatus of Tosti had an extraordinary skill in putting whole legions of devils out of possessed persons. A certain Tuscan lady having violated an ecclesiastical rule was seized in church by an evil spirit. The priest tried to cast it out by covering the lady with the altar cloth, but as he had persevered beyond his strength the spirit also entered into him. The lady was then taken by her relatives to certain wizards, who plunged her into a river, reciting at the same time magical incantations. The result was that though the first demon was driven out, a whole legion entered in, and from that time the woman began to be agitated with as many emotions and to shriek out with as many voices as there were devils in her body. At last she was brought to Fortunatus, who prayed over her for many days and nights, and in the end cured her with difficulty.[2] Again, another day, a priest of Valeria, named Stephen, returning from a journey, said carelessly to his servant, "Come, you devil, take off my stockings." Immediately invisible hands began to unloose his garters. The priest in great terror cried out, "Away, foul spirit, away! I spoke

[1] *Dialogues*, iii. 15. [2] *Ib.* i. 10.

not to thee, but to my servant." So the devil departed, leaving the garters half untied. "Whence," moralises Gregory, "if the old enemy be so ready in things pertaining to our body, he is yet more eager in watching the thoughts of our hearts."[1]

Turning from this subject to a pleasanter one, pointing to the extreme realism of the faith of these times, we have several stories of the souls of the recently dead having been seen which may be matched by the ghost stories and the stories of second-sight of our own day. "Many of our time," writes Gregory, "whose spiritual sight is purified by undefiled faith and frequent prayer, have often seen a soul departing from the body." Thus Benedict beheld the soul of his sister Scholastica depart in the form of a dove, and that of Germanus, Bishop of Capua, carried to heaven by angels in a globe of fire. Gregorius, a monk at Terracina, beheld the soul of his brother Speciosus when the latter died at Capua. Some people sailing between Sicily and Naples saw the soul of a certain recluse carried up to heaven.[2] Some monks in a monastery six miles from Nursia saw the soul of their dying abbot fly from his mouth in the form of a dove. A hermit living at Lipari, and gifted with second sight, declared that on the day of his death he saw the soul of King Theodoric, who was an Arian heretic, without shoes and girdle, and with his hands bound, taken between Pope John and Symmachus the Senator (both of whom he had put to

[1] *Dialogues*, iii. 20. [2] *Ib. passim.*

death), and thrown into Vulcan's Gulf, "which is not far from that place."[1] This last phrase reminds us that in early times the mouths of volcanoes were considered as entrances to hell, as they had in earlier times been deemed entrances to Hades, and Gregory tells us the mouths of these craters were getting bigger, to accommodate the larger crowds who had to pass through as the world grew older. A message sent by one dying man to another, stating that a ship was ready to take them to Sicily, was interpreted to mean they were bound for hell through the Sicilian volcanoes. It is not remarkable (for the belief was universal in the Middle Ages) that in Gregory's *Dialogues* the stories told imply a material hell with a real fire. His Deacon Peter, who in the *Dialogues* plays the part of Boswell to Johnson, and puts the question which the Pope answers, asked him how it is possible that a corporeal thing like fire can hold and torment that which is incorporeal and without body. The Pope asked, in turn, if angels and devils were not incorporeal? and having got an affirmative answer, he crushes his questioner with Matthew xxv. 41, "Go into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels."[2] Miracles were the everyday explanation of all unusual phenomena then as now, and in most cases they argue an extreme simplicity in the narrator and a want (which was not felt) of any critical faculty or scientific knowledge. Thus we read *inter alia* in the *Dialogues* "of fish mirac-

[1] *Dialogues*, iv. 30. [2] *Ib.* iv. 29.

ulously supplied to an ascetic on a fast day; of great rocks removed or arrested by prayer; of a saint rendered invisible to his enemies; of poison made innocuous by the sign of the cross; of lamps lighted without hands or burning without oil; of wild beasts, birds, and reptiles gifted with miraculous intelligence; of glass and crockery smashed and made whole; of provisions miraculously provided or increased; of raging fires stayed; of sick persons and animals healed; of dead bodies raised to life or miraculously preserved, or singing or moving or undergoing unnatural transformation in the tomb; of springs produced by prayer, and rivers altering their course; of second sight; of the casting out of devils."[1]

Such are samples of the many stories told in the *Dialogues*, which are utilised by Gregory to impart lessons in morals and in dogma to his friend Peter, and which made his name so famous. The *Euchologium Graecum* calls Gregory *ὁ δοῦλός σου Γρηγόριος τοῦ Διαλόγου*, and in the *Legatio* of Liudprand he is quoted as "*Gregorius, qui a vobis appellatur est Dialogus.*"[2]

These stories emphasise for us in part the mixture of shrewdness and superstition which characterised Gregory's mind. Here is Mr. Dudden's judgment upon them, with which I quite agree. "It is certainly astonishing that the clear-headed man who managed the papal estates and governed the Church with such

[1] Dudden, i. 333, 334.
[2] Pertz, iii. 351; Plummer, *Bede*, vol. ii. p. 70.

admirable skill should have contributed to the propagation of these wild tales of demons, and wizards, and haunted houses, of souls made visible, of rivers obedient to written orders, of corpses that scream and walk. And yet such is the fact. The landlord of the Papal Patrimonies and the author of the *Dialogues* are one and the same person, and in him we have, perhaps, the first genuine Italian example of the mediaeval intellect."[1] The fact is, the critical faculty had been almost suppressed among men of culture and letters in the Church, who were in continual dread of some new heresy arising by its employment, and who everywhere discouraged the study of dialectics. Gregory's touchstone of historic truth was a very simple and easy one. He claims to believe the stories told by the good and pious as if he had seen the events with his own eyes, and definitely says that he had received a certain report from those who were so good that he could not doubt their truth. Granting the honesty of the witness, he held that the credibility of the story followed as a matter of course.

On the subject of dreams, Gregory was a good deal more rational. In the forty-eighth dialogue of the fourth book he tells us there are six kinds of dreams. Sometimes, he says, they proceed of too much fulness or emptiness of the stomach; sometimes by illusion, sometimes by both thought and illusion, sometimes by revelation, and sometimes by both thought and revelation. The two first we

[1] *Op. cit.* i. 356.

know by experience to be true, and the four last we find named in Scripture. He quotes passages from the Bible which, he holds, show that dreams are sometimes illusions of our secret enemy: as "dreams have made many to err, and hoping in them have they been deceived";[1] and again, "you shall not be soothsayers or observe dreams." As showing that they sometimes come both of thought and illusion, he quotes the saying of the wise man: "dreams follow many cares."[2] Of those that come by mystical revelation he cites Joseph's dream,[3] and the angel's message to the Virgin to go to Egypt with the Child. While of those coming both from thought and divine revelation he cites Daniel's report about the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. "Some dreams come from many roots, nor is it easy to know from what cause they proceed"; he contends, therefore, that we ought to believe them with hesitation.

To holy men alone, he holds, is it given to decide between illusions and revelations, and between messages from the good and bad spirits, and he therefore counsels a healthy scepticism in the matter. As an example he quotes the case of a man who lived at Rome, and dreamt he had had long life promised, yet died directly after. St. Catherine of Sienna similarly claimed it as a privilege of saints to discriminate between illusions and true revelations.

[1] Ecclus. xxxiv. 7.
[2] Eccles. v. 3.
[3] Gen. xxxvii. 5–10.

NOTE.—Since writing the previous chapter I have come across one or two other ritual changes, etc., attributed to Saint Gregory. It would seem that it had been the custom at Rome for the neophytes at their first Easter Mass, immediately after the Canon, to be given a drink composed of honey, water, and milk, which had been specially blessed. This was doubtless in view of the very long and trying service they had gone through. This potion, says Duchesne, is mentioned in the sixth century by Johannes Diaconus in his letter to Senarius and in the Leonian Sacramentary, but does not appear in later documents of the Roman liturgy. Herr H. Usener (*Rhein Mus.*, vol. lvii. p. 189) argues that it was suppressed in the time of Saint Gregory, and probably by that Pope himself (Duchesne, 315 and note 1). Duchesne says that in later rituals the lustral water with which the people were aspersed at the consecration of a church was called *Gregorian*. I also think it probable that, in several matters of which we have no record, the differences between the primitive usage in Spain, Gaul, and Ireland, and at Rome were due to Gregory's innovations.

CHAPTER VIII

Saint Gregory's influence on the theology of the Middle Ages was profound. He was treated by the Latin Church as the greatest of its doctors, and it is impossible to deal with his life without giving an epitome of his views and of his innovations in matters of Faith and Morals.

It need hardly be said that nowhere in his writings can we find any claim to be the infallible judge of Dogmatic Truth. The doctrine of papal infallibility has no place anywhere in his works any more than in those of his predecessors or in those of his successors for several centuries. His whole thought was entirely opposed to anything of the kind. While, as we have seen, he claims for the Roman See the position of being the senior one in Christendom, it is only as the administrative head of a hierarchy in which all the Episcopate has equal rights. *Primus inter pares* is the position he alone asks for. This again was only in matters of discipline and Church order, and in insisting on every one submitting not to the Pope's but to the Church's standards and definitions of truth and dogma. He was, in his own eyes, the senior executive official of the Church and nothing more. He

knew too well how the popes had in most cases been selected, and the method of selection went on on similar lines after he was gone. Like the other influential officials in the Empire, he was really the nominee of the Emperor, nor could he take his seat until his appointment had been confirmed by the head of the State. The election by the Roman people, lay and clerical, was a form only, just as the election of an English bishop by the chapter of his cathedral is. The *congé d'élire* really came in both cases from elsewhere, and it has always come from elsewhere in the case of the popes. There is more than a witty joke in the grim saying of a later satirist, that a pope's election is the result of the Holy Spirit, working in the Conclave, qualified always by the veto of the Emperor of Austria—in at least one instance not long ago by the veiled veto of another sovereign who was not even a Catholic.

To return, however, a pope selected in this fashion would, *prima facie*, be a singularly unsuitable vessel in which to enshrine infallibility. It is important to emphasise what is a portentous fact, namely, that so great and influential a pope as Saint Gregory, agreeing in this with his predecessors and successors, should have been quite unconscious of the Divine *afflatus* with which he or they were endowed. In the case of Gregory, as we shall see (even if he unwittingly possessed so great a gift), it is clear that it did not protect him from some very doubtful opinions on matters of Faith and Morals.

THE BASILICA OF ST. SABINA.

An almost perfect specimen of a great Church in St. Gregory's time.

To face p. 242.

Apart from this, we nowhere find in his writings, any more than in those of any of his predecessors or of his successors for some centuries, a hint that the popes have two voices—one when they are supposed to speak *ex cathedra* and as the mouthpiece of the Church, and the other the workaday language of the gentle and simple, the good and the wicked, the educated and the ignorant individual popes who make up the very human galaxy of the occupants of St. Peter's chair. They were all, so far as we know, quite ignorant of the distinction so vital and important to everybody. If they knew it they took no pains to give poor mortals a hint how they were to discriminate in difficult cases between the language of popes on different occasions, and thus save them not merely from mental difficulties but from moral ones which might land them in dire punishment.

We can only guess what Gregory would have said if he could have foreseen that a huge Council, meeting at Rome twelve hundred years later, would pronounce him capable of infallible decisions, and would nevertheless fail to offer any criterion of the occasions when the infallibility was to be deemed authoritative, and when and how *ex cathedra* judgments were to be distinguished from fallible opinions. He would not surely have left the position so that no two theologians could be got to agree upon a definition, and simple men must be content to accept with all humility the position that each individual pronouncement is to be judged by itself

according to the *a priori* prejudices, motives, and interests of the technical advisers of the Roman Curia, and of the very potent Society of Jesus which so largely inspires it. Vicarious infallibility like this would have been rejected by the robust good sense of the Pope as both useless and dangerous.

The ultimate source of Gregory's theology, according to his view, was not his own innate wisdom and divine inspiration, but the teaching of the Bible and what he found in it.

As he says in the *Magna Moralia*, "Holy Scripture is incomparably superior to every form of knowledge and science. It preaches the truth and calls us to the heavenly fatherland," etc. etc. To him the whole of Scripture was directly inspired by the Holy Spirit. He consequently brushed aside as irrelevant and of very secondary interest, questions as to who wrote the books and when they were written. The writers, he held, were mere passive scribes; the words were those of the Holy Spirit.[1]

He no doubt felt much handicapped in his study of Scripture by the fact that he knew neither of the

[1] *Quis haec scripserit, valde supervacue quaeritur, cum tamen auctor libri Spiritus sanctus fideliter credatur. Ipse igitur haec scripsit, qui scribenda dictavit. Ipse scripsit, qui et in illius opere inspirator exstitit, et per scribentis vocem imitanda ad nos ejus facta transmisit. Si magni cujusdam viri susceptis epistolis legeremus verba, sed quo calamo fuissant scripta quaereremus, ridiculum profecto esset epistolarum auctorem scire sensumque cognoscere sed quali calamo earum verba impressa fuerint indagare*, etc. (*Mor.*, Praef. 2).

languages in which it had been originally written, namely, Hebrew and Greek, and could only get at its contents through translations.

In his time two such translations were available. —one, the old Vulgate, whose origin and date are still so obscure, but which had been the guiding star of the Latin Church from its beginning. This edition of the whole Bible was translated from the Greek, which was the mother-tongue of the New Testament, while in the Old Testament, which was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic, it followed the old Jewish Greek translation known as the Septuagint. Beside this was the new version, which had been made by Jerome, who followed the Hebrew and Aramaic texts in the Old Testament and the Greek in the New.

The most important distinction between the two was not so much the considerable difference in their texts but in their Canons; this especially affected the Old Testament, in which Jerome followed the shorter Canon of the later Jews, while the old Vulgate followed the longer Canon of the older Jews as found in the Septuagint, and treated the so-called apocryphal books as canonical.

While Jerome's new version had at this time, especially in Gaul, largely displaced the old Vulgate, the latter still retained its hold upon Africa and largely also upon Italy. Gregory used both versions. In the introduction to his commentary on Job above cited, he explains his attitude in the words: *Novam translationem dissero, sed, cum*

probationis causa exigit, tunc novam, nunc veterem per testimonia assumo; ut quia sedes apostolica cui auctore Deo praesideo, utraque utitur, mei quoque labor studii ex utraque fulciatur.[1]

This applies, however, only to the text. It is perfectly plain that in regard to the Canon, Gregory followed that of the old version, which had been affirmed by three African Councils and in the letter of Pope Innocent the First to the Gaulish bishop Exuperius, and he habitually quotes the so-called apocryphal books just as if they were on precisely the same level as other parts of Scripture.

The question of the canonicity of this or that book never troubled him. He accepted the Bible as the Church had handed it to him, as a divinely inspired work which she in her dogmas illuminates by bringing to light its hidden things and clearing up its obscurities.[2] "The ultimate appeal is to Scripture itself; and the propagation of the Scripture throughout the world is the *raison d'être* of the Church."[3] There was no necessity at that time for keeping the Bible hidden from the educated laity. This objection to its general use only arose when the Lollards and Hussites used it for attacking the authority of the Church. The usefulness of Bible reading was delightfully presented in a letter of Gregory to Barbara and Antonina, the daughters of his friend the Patrician Venantius. "I wish you," he says, "to love the reading of Holy Scriptures,

[1] Intr. Ep. to the *Moralia*.
[2] *Moralia*, xviii. 60.
[3] *Hom. in Ez.* i. 10, par. 87.

that so long as Almighty God shall unite you to husbands you may know how you should live and how you should manage your houses" (*Et qualiter vivere et domum vestram quo modo disponere debeatis*).[1]

Gregory made little or no difference in his estimate of the two Covenants, and he argues about them just as a very different person with a very different outlook, Luther, argued at a later day, namely, that all Scripture is concerned with the revelation of God in Christ, and that Christ is the subject of all Scripture, and every word and act in it receives in Christ its ultimate significance.[2] Christ was to him the centre of the Old Testament as well as the New. The one foretells by allegory and prophecy what the other openly proclaims. The Old Testament is the prophecy of the New, the New the explanation of the Old.[3]

This extravagant theory could only have been sustained by one who continually, like so many of his predecessors and contemporaries, put aside the plain language of the two Testaments, and especially treated the Old Testament as largely a cryptic

[1] *E. and H.* xi. 59; Barmby, xi. 78. [2] *Moralia*, vi. 1.

[3] "*In Testamenti Veteris littera Testamentum Novum latuit per allegoriam. Utraque Testamenta ita sibi in Mediatore Dei et hominum congruunt, ut quod unum designat hoc alterum exhibeat. . . . Inest Testamento Veteri Testamentum Novum. Et quod Testamentum Vetus promisit, hoc Novum exhibuit; et quod illud occulte annuntiat, hoc istud exhibitum aperte clamat. Prophetia ergo Testamenti Novi Testamentum Vetus est; et expositio Testamenti Veteris Testamentum Novum*" (*Hom. in Ez.* i. 6, pars. 12, 15); and again, "*Per omne quod Testamentum Vetus loquitur Testamenti Novi opera nuntiantur*" (*Moralia*, xxxix. 73).

document whose real meaning was only accessible to those who could translate it into allegories and by the most forced and fantastic of interpretation. He habitually adopts this method of exegesis, in spite of certain warnings he gives others as to the dangers of this method of interpretation. Even so Gregory was constrained to admit that in many cases the Old Testament contained the germ or root only, of which the ripe fruit was to be found in the New, and that the doctrine of the Old Testament was imperfect and in many cases concealed from the simple and uneducated "so that the common people could understand the letter but not the inner meaning."[1] He further continually urged, like Luther long after, that, as Mr. Dudden says, "God's word appeals to character rather than to intellect." In order to understand it a man must lead a godly life, and he who desires to understand the mysteries can only do so because he loves God. I shall return to Gregory's method of interpretation presently.

It was not only nor chiefly in interpreting the Bible that the Pope's lack of knowledge of Greek embarrassed him. The early Christian Church was essentially a Greek church. Its earliest writings, especially the discussions with the heretical sects, were nearly all written in Greek. Its terminology was largely Greek, and it was in Greek alone that many of the technical ecclesiastical terms had a full meaning which could not be adequately translated into Latin. Virtually all the theology of the first

[1] *Hom. in Ez.* ii. 4, par. 9; *Moralia*, xviii. 60.

three centuries was Greek. To none of these sources could Gregory get access at first hand. He could only in part get at the results through such Greek books as had been translated by Hilary and Rufinus and through the Latin translation of the Acts of the Eastern Councils.

In regard to the Councils, he accepted the first four without question and all the findings of the fifth one, except those relating to "The Three Chapters" which we have discussed in an earlier page. This exception, as we have seen, was a very illogical one, for it *pro tanto* made him a reviser and judge of the finding of a Council, a position he never dreams of adopting in any other case. Except in this instance he was perfectly orthodox as orthodoxy was defined by Councils.

In regard to the Creeds, he is supposed to have departed from their accepted form in one respect only—namely, in accepting the double procession of the Holy Ghost, which was contained in none of the Creeds until his day, when we find it occurring apparently for the first time in the declaration of King Reccared on his abandoning Arianism at the Council of Toledo in 587. The innovation was then made at the instance of Leander, the Archbishop of Seville and Gregory's friend, probably under the influence of the Spanish theologian, John of Biclaro, and was apparently derived from them and was inserted by John the Deacon in the form of the Creed he puts in Gregory's mouth. It is included by John the Deacon in the profession of faith he

makes Gregory affirm when he became Pope. The general adoption of the clause in the accepted Creeds of the West, including those of the Reformers, took place much later (see Appendix), and it was always excluded by the Eastern Church, as it is rightly excluded now by it, for whatever its truth may be it has no adequate Conciliar authority. It was a rash and unjustifiable thing for an alteration involving a dogmatic pronouncement to be thus foisted into the symbols of the Church by the mere initiative of any individual divine or ecclesiastic, however excellent a person he might be, and with however good a motive. It was a bad example, and was followed in other matters afterwards by many unscrupulous glossators and interpolators.

Apart from his acceptance of the pronouncements of the Councils and the Creeds on points of dogma, Gregory for the most part followed the earlier Fathers, and treated their replies to the various heresies as conclusive. He was not fond of polemics. The need for them had indeed largely gone by since all the great heresies were extinct. The only important fight involving doctrine and not discipline which he had, was that with Eutychius of Constantinople, which we have described above.[1] In most of the great Christian issues he accepted the leading of Augustine. For instance, on the questions of free will, of grace, of the transcendent superiority of faith to reason in matters spiritual, and the doctrine of God, Gregory's account of His attributes comes

[1] *Ante*, p. 22, etc.

directly from Augustine, so with the doctrines of the Trinity, of original sin, and of Christ's miraculous birth. For the most part he followed orthodox lines through the tangled metaphysics with which the discussions of the earlier Christian centuries had surrounded the double personality of Christ, the doctrine of the atonement, and the work of the Holy Spirit. He, however, illustrated all these questions with a surprising wealth of Biblical and other examples, and with an ingenuity and refinement and an expenditure of acute thought which was astounding when we consider how much of his life was devoted to the practical duties of his office. It is really surprising how seldom he is found halting in traversing fields where so many fierce battles had been fought with the ingenious sophistries and word-splittings of the earlier Greek writers.

Where he chiefly shone, however, was in dealing with secondary matters in which the field was open to any amount of conjecture, and where the opinion of the Church had not been fixed by Conciliar and other pronouncements. It was here that Gregory surpassed all other commentators, since he adopted the most flexible and elastic of criteria. Mr. Dudden puts the case with his usual skill. "It has been pointed out," he says, "that according to his license of interpretation, there is nothing that might not be found in any book ever written. As interpreted by the allegorical method, any passage in Scripture may mean almost anything : every word is a revelation, and the expositor is inevitably

tempted to substitute his own fancies for plain teaching, and to involve himself in a labyrinthine confusion of symbolical obscurities. Gregory himself was aware of the dangers of the method. He found by experience that very different interpretations might be given of the same passage, and he was willing to regard all as legitimate that were in accordance with the faith of the Church." "In understanding Holy Scripture," says the Pope, "whatever is not opposed to a sound faith ought not to be rejected."[1]

We must remember, however, that he was not the inventor of this supple method of interpretation. "In the West, allegory was the fashion, and a sober exegesis on a grammatico-historical basis was practically unknown. Before Gregory, Augustine had taught a fourfold sense of Scripture, and after him the doctors maintained a threefold (Paschasius), a fourfold (Aquinas), a sevenfold (Angelom of Luxeuil), an eightfold (Odo of Cluny), and even an infinite number of senses in Scripture (Scotus Erigena) . . . the immense popularity of the *Magna Moralia* in the Middle Ages is an incontrovertible proof of the attractiveness of the method."[2]

Gregory was, however, its great master, and it was so characteristic of him and had such wide results that a few paragraphs may fitly be devoted to a more concrete treatment of it.

Gregory's greatest work, his commentaries on

[1] *E. and H.* iii. 62; Barmby, iii. 67; Dudden, ii. 307, 308.
[2] Dudden, ii. 309.

Job, entitled *Magna Moralia*, which he composed at Constantinople and afterwards revised, was the one in which his peculiar exegesis and fantastic moralising are most displayed. "As a commentary in the modern sense of the word, the *Magna Moralia* is well-nigh worthless; . . . of the original language he knew nothing, of Oriental manners and modes of thought Gregory had no conception. He never seems to have realised that the book was a poem, or to have made the smallest allowance for poetical expressions, usages, and metaphors. He understood it all with gross literalness, and yet at the same time beneath the letter he discovered, or fancied he discovered, a wealth of esoteric meaning."[1] Milman says: "The Book of Job, according to Gregory, comprehended in itself all natural, all Christian theology, and all morals. It was at once a true and a wonderful history, an allegory containing in its secret sense the whole theory of the Christian Church and Christian sacraments, and a moral philosophy applicable to all mankind."[2] "The form of the book disgusts the modern reader. . . . It is the endless allegorising, the twisting of every word and phrase into a symbol of hidden truth, that is so inexpressibly wearisome. . . . But whatever opinion modern students may form of Gregory's masterpiece, there cannot be the slightest question of its great popularity from Gregory's time onwards through the Middle Ages. . . . It became a favourite text-book of Christian doctrine. Manuscripts were multiplied,

[1] Dudden, i. 195. [2] *Op. cit.* 2nd ed. i. 406.

epitomes compiled. By the twelfth century numerous translations had been made of it, and it was regarded as indispensable for every well-furnished library. Nor can we wonder at the success of the work. The *Magna Moralia* is a mine of theology, and the unambiguous, matter-of-fact way in which the dogmas are dealt with commended it to many who were unable to follow the subtle reasonings of Augustine."[1]

"The fanciful element in Gregory's exegesis is best illustrated in his explanation of numbers. Thus, three is generally supposed to have some reference to the Trinity; five to the senses, and hence to the whole world of sense; seven to the sevenfold gift of the Spirit, or to rest, as denoted by the seventh day, or to this life as denoted by the days of the week. . . . But Gregory's explanations of words are often no less fanciful than his explanations of numbers; especially as he is fond of attaching more than one meaning to the same word. He says: *In sacro eloquio cum quilibet unus sermo dicitur, non semper unam eandemque rem significare credatur.* Thus the words 'sun,' 'lion,' 'ox,' may be understood in a good or a bad sense.[2] Sometimes Gregory gives three meanings to one word,[3] sometimes as many as five.[4] Again, in his interpretation of the typical significance of Old Testament characters thus: Isaac means God,

[1] Dudden, i. 195, 196.
[2] *Hom. in Ez.*, ii. 7, par. 1; *Moralia*, v. 41.
[3] *Ex. gr. somnus*, *Moralia*, v. 54.
[4] *Ex gr. herba*, *Moralia*, xxix. 52.

Jacob the Gentiles, and Esau the Jews,[1] but in the *Moralia*, xxxv. 26, Isaac typifies the Jewish people, and Jacob, Christ; elsewhere Isaac is a type of Christ. . . . In the *Homilies on the Gospels* he has frequently missed the most important and suggestive part of the teaching, in his anxiety to pass to a mystical interpretation." [2]

Dr. Barmby has selected another series of examples of Gregory's marvellous ingenuity in this behalf. On the text: "There were born unto him seven sons and seven daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels and five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-asses," Gregory comments thus: "The seven sons mean the twelve apostles, and, therefore, the clergy, because seven is the perfect number, and, multiplied within itself, four by three or three by four produces twelve. The three daughters mean the faithful laity, because they are to worship the Trinity. The seven thousand sheep mean the multitude of Jewish converts, since they came from the pastures of the Law; the three thousand camels, the multitude of the Gentiles, the camels denoting Gentiles as carrying burdens, for the Gentiles were burdened with their idolatrous superstitions, but laid them down when they came to Christ; and the same thing is shown of Rebecca having ridden on a camel, expressing her Gentile condition, when she journeyed to meet Isaac, but

[1] *Hom. in Ez.* i. 6, par. 3.
[2] Dudden, ii. 307, 308, note.

alighted from it when she saw him; or the camel may denote the Samaritans, inasmuch as it chews the cud, but does not part the hoof, for the Samaritans receive the law in part, but in part reject it. The oxen and asses are explained in a similar style." Dr. Barmby may well add that this fashion of interpretation "allows anything whatever to be drawn out of the text according to the mind of the theologian."[1]

As another sample of his mystical interpretation, and at the same time an account of the baptismal practice then in vogue, we may quote a passage from one of his letters to his friend Bishop Leander, whom he styles "*dudum mihi in amicitiis familiari ter junctis.*"[2] He says: "In regard to threefold immersion no truer answer can be given than what you have yourself felt to be right—namely, that where there is one faith a diversity of usage does no harm to Holy Church. Now we in immersing thrice signify the sacraments of the three days' sepulture; so that when the infant is a third time lifted out of the water, the resurrection after three days may be expressed. Or if any one should, perhaps, think that this is done out of veneration for the supreme Trinity, neither so is there any objection to immersing the person to be baptized in the water once, since, there being one substance in three subsistencies (*in tribus subsistentiis una substantia est*) it cannot be in any way reprehensible to immerse the infant in baptism either thrice or once, seeing that by three immersions the Trinity

[1] Barmby, *Gregory the Great*, 178, 179. [2] *Dial.* iii. 31.

of Persons and in one the singleness of the Divinity may be denoted. But inasmuch as up to this time it has been the custom of heretics to immerse infants in baptism thrice, I am of opinion that this ought not to be done among you; lest while they number the immersions they should divide the Divinity, and while they continue to do as they have been used to do, they should boast of having got the better of our custom."[1]

Let us now turn to that part of his theology which Gregory derived from the Ascetics, whom he loved so well, and to whose views he gave so much authority.

Here Gregory's attitude caused a great revolution in the beliefs of the Church. With him tradition meant not merely that of the corporate voice of the guardians of the Church's doctrine, its bishops, as delivered at and settled by general Councils. It meant the much more unstable and dangerous and elusive views of the hysterical, detached, lonely, self-conscious, ecstatic hermits, monks, and devotees whose visions were supposed to be inspired, and were fully believed by Gregory to be so. Out of these he created a new world of strange demons and angelic beings and a very material hell and heaven, the one full of horrors and the other of naïve poetry, which under the shadow of his name overflowed into every pulpit and every sermon, and eventually formed the largest part of the popular Christianity of the Western Church. Let us turn shortly to

[1] *E. and H.* i. 41; Barmby, *Eps. of Greg.* i. 43.

this, and we will begin with his notions about the powers of evil. Mr. Dudden has admirably pointed out how the whole outlook in regard to these creatures as previously held was modified by Gregory. He, in fact, incorporated into it many fantastic elements which came from the excited imaginations of the ascetics and anchorites who, in their solitary hours of meditation, fasting, self-abnegation, and torture, conjured up visions which the Pope accepted as true on the ground that he held their reporters to be good and honest men. Thus modified, this theory became the chief armoury from which the mediaeval Church and especially the friars drew their most effective weapons for mentally flogging the poor and simple into what they deemed their duty. Mediaeval artists galore, drew a large part of their inspiration from the same source, and covered the walls of the churches with incidents from the supposed experiences of the Saints, that appealed far more in their grim realism to the popular mind than the contents of the sacred volume, which was seldom heard at first hand. As Mr. Dudden says: "In Gregory's *Dialogues* we meet for the first time with the fully developed conception of the mediaeval devil. Here Satan is represented no longer as the portentous power of darkness, but as a spirit of petty malice, more irritating than awful, playing all manner of mischievous pranks, and doing at times serious damage, but easily routed by a sprinkling of holy water or the sign of the cross. The devil of Gregory's

Dialogues is in all essential respects the same as he who flung a stone at Dominic and got bespattered with Luther's ink. He is represented at one time as making his appearance all on fire, with flaming mouth and flashing eyes, yet condescending to make a pun on the name of a saint; at another time disguised as a physician carrying horn and mortar, and riding on a mule; again, under the form of a little black boy on a bird with flapping wings. He haunts a house in Corinth, rendering it uninhabitable through his imitations of 'the roaring of lions, the bleating of sheep, the braying of asses, the hissing of serpents, the grunting of hogs, and the squeaking of rats.' He lives for three years under the form of a serpent in the cave of a holy hermit of Campania."[1]

In such representations as these the devil has lost much of his terror and has become comparatively innocuous. He is already the cunning impostor, full of tricks and devices, with whom the Middle Ages were familiar, and his attendant demons have undergone a similar transformation. These demons have the right of entering into human beings and taking possession of them on the occasion even of quite slight faults. Witches and wizards, on the other hand, are believed to have had traffic with them, and the doctrine of demoniacal agency already bore fruit in the burning and maltreatment of the supposed sorcerers. "The conception of the devil world which for centuries prevailed in

[1] These stories are all from the *Dialogues*. See Dudden, ii. 368.

the Church was substantially the same as that of Gregory."[1]

Gregory's views of the next world were also largely built up by him out of the reported visions or hallucinations of those whose reputed goodness made their testimony in his eyes have somewhat of the character of inspiration. These were incorporated in the *Dialogues*, which became very largely the authoritative *vade mecum* on such topics, and naturally inspired the dogmatic teaching of the Church on the subject.

With Gregory, Hell was a subterranean region, as far below the earth as the earth itself is below the sky, and volcanoes gave access to it. There was a higher and a lower region in it. The former a place of weariness, but not of torment, where on account of original sin the souls of all the ancient saints were delivered till Christ descended and set them free. The lower hell was the prison of the damned, a bottomless abyss of corporeal fire, created from the beginning of the world for the punishment of the wicked, and which, be it remembered, was supposed in some way to torment disembodied spirits who had no nerves and no bodily pain. Before the Judgment the *spirits* of the damned were alone tormented. After the Judgment their bodies were also to be burnt in the infernal furnace. "It is necessary to believe, *credi necesse est*," says Gregory, "that from the day of their departure the reprobate are burnt with fire. This continues for ever, but

[1] Dudden, ii. 367–369.

without destroying its victims. Nor does the pain relieve them from continual terror and despair. Before the Judgment they are further tormented by witnessing the blessedness of the good in heaven. After the Judgment the wicked will no longer see the good, although the good will see the wicked. The actual sufferings of the damned are not all the same, but are apportioned to the degrees of wickedness of the punished." See Dudden,[1] who quotes the *Moralia*, *Dialogues*, or the *Homilies* for each one of these statements.

Such was the horrible creed on the subject of Hell taught quite honestly by a man who was essentially good and in many ways very wise and very tender. It was made more horrible by the extreme theories of predestination then held which were inherited from Augustine, and by the justifications offered for it by the Pope in very sophistical arguments in which he attempts in vain to reconcile these notions with the attributes of the Almighty Father and the Fountain of all Good. The Scholastic theologians of the Middle Ages, and the so-called Holy Office or Inquisition, followed Gregory very closely in these matters. They also became the subject-matter of thousands of realistic pictures and of tens of thousands of sermons, and presently formed the basis of some of Dante's most lurid passages in his immortal poem. We can understand what an overwhelming power was thus placed in the hands of the priesthood for coercing

[1] ii. 435, 436.

the strongest wills into submission and for obtaining what concessions they wished from sick and dying sinners. This weapon was used with uncontrollable vigour by the Dominican preachers and the Franciscan evangelists, most of them very ignorant, superstitious men, and many of them also quite unscrupulous. Let me quote a story from Gregory's *Dialogues* in proof of what I say. "There was a saintly deacon of the Roman Church called Paschasius, a man of great holiness, much given to almsdeeds, devoted to the poor, and unselfish. Unfortunately he was a supporter of the Anti-Pope Laurentius, the opponent of Pope Symmachus (assuredly a very venial offence where the difficulty of deciding was so great). He nevertheless died with the reputation of a saint, and a demoniac was healed by touching the dalmatic on his bier. A long time after, Germanus, Bishop of Capua, was ordered by his physicians to take a course of hot baths, and in the midst of the steaming vapour he saw Paschasius. The spirit told him that he was being thus punished for having taken the part of Laurentius, and he begged the bishop for his prayers. The latter went away and prayed, and when he returned the spirit had vanished."[1] Here was a saintly man condemned to the pains of hell fire merely because he had supported one candidate instead of another in a struggle for the papal chair.

Such being Gregory's view of hell and its inhabitants, it will be well to consider his views of the

[1] *Dialogues*, iv. 40.

ways of escaping from it; these consisted of penance and purgatory.

In regard to penance, Gregory bases his position on the arbitrary postulate that no sin can be left unpunished, and he treats God as essentially the avenger of sin. He goes on to argue that the eternal penalties for sin can only be averted either by self-imposed suffering (penance) or suffering imposed upon us by God for our own good, and he urges that by the self-punishment of penance, sin is blotted out, so that it no longer remains to be judged and punished. With Gregory as with the Schoolmen, the process of penance is, *first*, perception of sin and then contrition for it followed by conversion; *secondly*, confession of sin; and *thirdly*, the compensation made in respect of it, consisting of alms, tears, meditation on the shortness of life, asceticism, etc. These he claims as an offering of virtue, by which we pay the fine of our evil actions, and which releases us from the debt of sin. He further urges that our good works must be proportionate to our sins. Lastly, he points out that by paying the fine of one sin, a man does not obtain licence to commit another. He must refrain from sin in future if his penance is to be effective, nor will the prayers and oblations of priests wash away his sins; every man must bear his own burden of sin. 'Like Augustine, however, he holds that good works alone will not suffice to wipe out sin unless supplemented by the mercy of God and the pleading of Christ.[1]

[1] Dudden, ii. 419–426.

It will be noticed that all this most elaborate argument is based on an *obiter dictum* of the Pope upon the necessity of sin being followed by punishment, which is unsupported by Biblical authority, where the blood of Christ is said to suffice to wash away all the sins of erring men ; and secondly, to another *obiter dictum* that the punishment due to sin can be averted by self-torture and the abnegation of human pleasure and joy, or by doing good works. He held, in fact, that the grace and the sacrifice of Christ did not satisfy the conditions of pardon and salvation unless and until sin itself had been purged, and this purging involved "a system of compensations by which good works are balanced against sins, and eternal punishment is remitted in consideration of adequate suffering."

For those who had failed by this most inconsequent method to undo the effects of their sins in this life a method was discovered equally remote from all Biblical authority, namely, Gregory's special interpretation of the meaning of Purgatory. The doctrine of Purgatory, which also became an awful instrument terrorising men and women and for extorting money from them in later times, was still undeveloped. Gregory was the first of the Fathers to lay down that this doctrine "*ought to be believed.*" It had been long taught that at the Day of Judgment all men would be called upon to purge their sins by a fiery ordeal, and Augustine had gone so far as to offer a pious opinion only that the souls of some might have to suffer this purgation in the inter-

mediate state, but the opinion (in the West at least) was almost universal that this purgation took place only at the Judgment. Gregory distinguishes three classes of men: the utterly bad, who on their death go immediately to hell; the completely good, who similarly go to heaven, "and enjoy the vision of God even before the Judgment"; and those who are too good for one place and too bad for the other, and only imperfectly good, and who, according to him, at their deaths go at once into purgatory and there remain till the Judgment. He thus dogmatically lays down what was quite a new doctrine, for which there is no authority whatever except his *obiter dictum*. The only authority he cites, in fact, is 1 Corinthians iii. 12.

In one of the *Dialogues*, iv. 41, he seems to excuse his departure from primitive tradition in this matter. He says: "The future age is now so near at hand that it almost touches us, *and therefore its nature is more nearly revealed*. We stand as it were in the twilight of the dawn, and the light is already breaking in."

Gregory affirms further that the prayers of the faithful on earth may shorten and soften the pains of purgatory, which may also be lightened by the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice.[1]

While Gregory taught that the souls of the good would immediately on their death go to heaven, he held that it was only after the Judgment that they would be joined by their bodies. In regard to this

[1] *Dialogues*, iv. 40; Dudden, ii. 429.

latter view he allows that many of his contemporaries had questioned the possibility of the body of man being restored from the dust into which it had been resolved. He argued at great length the other way, and doubtless largely fathered the mediaeval view on the subject. Let us now pass on again.

The sixth and seventh centuries were famous, among other things, for the number of "saints" which were added to the muster-roll of that motley body. What constitutes a saint in the technical sense has, so far as I know, never been defined. A great many of them were very worldly saints, and the title was very easily obtained. In Ireland, apparently, all the members of certain families were styled saints, as all Roman Catholic priests are now called father (a style rejected by Christ when applied to Himself), while any man who led a fairly exemplary life in those wicked days, or did the Church an eminent service, obtained the distinction almost as a matter of course. Gregory, however, would appear to have limited the meaning of the term saint a good deal more than his contemporaries; and, judging from one of the canons passed at his Synod of Rome in 595, he held that the only people who were worthy to be so treated were the apostles and martyrs. He also, as Mr. Dudden says, never teaches, like his namesake of Tours, that the invocation of saints is a necessary part of a Christian's duty, or that their assistance is in any sense indispensable for salvation. Rather

his doctrine seems to be in general accord with that approved by the Council of Trent, that the saints reigning with Christ offer their prayers to God for man, and that it is "a good and useful practice" to invoke their prayers, assistance, and protection.[1]

The lucky people who were pronounced to be saints were presumed to have gone to heaven immediately on their death, and it became the fashion to appeal to them to intercede for their protégés. They were thus supposed not only to work for the latter, but themselves to do miracles after their death. The practice of invoking them was much approved by Gregory, who quotes many examples of cases where the saints are supposed to have appeared and lent their support to poor struggling mortals and brought benefits to them after such appeals.

In a sermon preached on the festival of SS. Processus and Martinian, he says: "Make these saints, beloved, your patrons in your trial before the severe Judge; take them as your defenders in the day of the awful terror. . . . Behold the severe Judge, Jesus is coming. There is before us the terror of that mighty army of Angels and Archangels. In that assembly our case will be tried. . . . The Holy Martyrs are here ready to be our defenders. They wish to be asked; I may say they beg us to beg them. Seek them then to support your prayer, fly to them to protect you from your

[1] Dudden, ii. 371.

guilt; for the Judge Himself wishes to be entreated that He may not punish sinners."[1]

It has been often remarked how very seldom Gregory mentions the Virgin, whose cult had then scarcely begun in the West. He nowhere refers to her having been without actual sin, as was stated by St. Augustine, but speaks expressly of the sinfulness of all human beings except Christ Himself. Nowhere does he mention the Assumption of the Virgin which is spoken of by his contemporary Gregory of Tours. Nor does he in any way countenance the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, declaring, on the contrary, that Christ alone was conceived without sin.[2] He, however, unmistakably affirms the perpetual virginity of Mary.[3]

The best proof that the cult of the Virgin in the sense understood in the modern Roman Church had not begun in the time of Gregory in Italy, is to be found in a remarkable fact pointed out in the very neutral pages of Duchesne. He says, speaking of the four festivals of the Presentation, generally known as the Purification of the Blessed Virgin (14th February), the Annunciation (25th March), the Nativity (8th September), and the death (*dormitio*) of the Virgin (15th August): "It is certain that they were not yet in existence in the time of Gregory. Not only does he never make mention of them, but the same is true of all the documents bearing on the

[1] *Hom. in Ez.* xxxii. 8; Dudden, ii. 369, 370.

[2] *Moralia*, xi. 70, xviii. 84; *Hom. in Ez.* ii. 4, par. 17.

[3] *Moralia*, xxiv. 3, xviii. 85; *Hom. in Ez.* xxvi. par. 1, xxxviii. par. 3; *Exp. in Sept. Psalm. Poenit.* v. 27; Dudden, ii. 373.

Roman usage prior to, or considered to be prior to, the seventh century, such as the Calendar of Carthage, the Leonian Sacramentary, etc." But what is still more conclusive, these festivals were still unknown to the Anglo-Saxon Church at the beginning of the eighth century. They do not appear either in the Auxerre recension of the Hieronymian Martyrology or in the Gallican liturgical books. These four festivals, Duchesne says, were of Byzantine importation, and were introduced in the first place at Rome. The countries of the Gallican rite knew nothing of them until they adopted the Roman liturgy.[1] The Church of "Rome" in Italy seems to have celebrated no festival of the Virgin before the seventh century.[2] Gregory's references to the Virgin in the *Dialogues* are extraordinarily few considering what a place she fills in the later literature of the Church. He only once refers to an invocation of Mary when he tells a story of a Bishop Bonifacius, whose nephew, a priest, having sold his horse for twelve crowns, laid them up in a chest. Being abroad upon some business, certain poor people pitifully begged of the Bishop for some relief. Having no money by him, and not wishing to send them home empty-handed, he accordingly broke open his nephew's strong box and took the twelve crowns, which he gave to the poor folk. On his return the latter was very angry, and abused his uncle, saying, "All others can live with you; I alone am not suffered to be quiet. Give me my money

[1] Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, 272, 273. [2] *Ib.* 271–273.

which you have taken out of the box." To appease him he went into the Church of the Virgin Mary, and, lifting up his hands with his vestment upon them, he prayed to her, and received in answer to his prayer a miraculous gift of twelve gold solidi "as bright as if they had just come from the mint." These he cast at the raging priest, at the same time denouncing him for his intention of using the hidden money for simony.[1]

In another place in which a story of the Virgin is related, she is said to have appeared in a vision to a little maiden called Musa, and shown her several other little people of her own years clad in white, and asked her whether she wished to join them and enter her service. On her assenting, the Virgin bade her put away her laughter and pastimes and adopt a serious life, and said that in thirty days she should join the company she had seen. When the thirtieth day arrived, being ill of an ague, she saw the Virgin and her company, who bade her join them. Upon this she twice said, "Behold, blessed Lady, I come." In his comment on the story the Pope says, "Seeing mankind is subject to many and innumerable vices, I think that the greatest part of heaven is replenished with little children and infants."[2] Many similar stories, but not perhaps so naïve, could be gathered from later legends, the one associated with Lourdes being especially notable.

On the subject of angels Gregory's vivid imagina-

[1] *Dialogues*, i. 9. [2] *Ib.* iv. 17.

tion produced a very remarkable new departure, which was also a great source of inspiration to mediaeval painters and preachers, and fixed in a settled form the many aspects of this very intangible subject which had arisen in the visions and ecstatic thought of numberless ascetics and anchorites and simple people. Like Augustine, he treats the angels as creatures who, with men alone, have the gift of reason, both being made in the image of God and as being in substance intermediate between God and man. He treats them as endowed with vast knowledge, but as quite incap ableof understanding or rivalling the infinitude of God. Like all things created they are liable to change, "otherwise," he argued, "'the great apostasy' would not have been possible." They are absolutely free from sin, and are never weary of contemplating the Almighty. In regard to their functions, they first govern the world in general; secondly, they regulate, assist, and champion various nations. Thus he argued that the angel who spoke to Daniel was the guardian of the Jews of the Captivity, while Michael protected those who remained in Judæa. They only fight for their protégés when the latter are doing right. Thirdly, they protect and minister to individuals; and lastly, they act as direct messengers and envoys from God to man. They communicate sometimes by words, and at others by things, by mental images, by heavenly substances (as a voice from a cloud), or by worldly substances (as the voice of Balaam's ass). They are divided into different grades and orders.

The angels proper carry messages of small importance to men, the archangels messages of greater importance. The latter alone have names; each order, nine in all, up to the seraphim, has its special vocation, which he describes. The original number of the angels was reduced by Satan's apostasy, and will be restored at the end of the world when the several places left vacant in the various orders will be filled by the redeemed of mankind, and Gregory apparently taught that it was in order to fill up the deficiency among the original number of angels that man was created. Angels were not to be worshipped, for since the Incarnation man was no longer inferior to the angels.[1] This is a good sample of Gregory's method of deductive reasoning and of using purely arbitrary premises in his arguments, and thus making a parade of knowledge which is really nothing more than fantastic imagining. In this he was really a forerunner of the Schoolmen for whom he provided so many subjects.

In Gregory's scheme of arrangement for the heavenly hierarchy he differs in one respect from his predecessor, the Pseudo Dionysius,[2] in putting "the Virtues" on a more exalted plane. The Scholastic writers eventually adopted the view of the latter, and Dante describes the Pope as smiling when, on entering heaven and viewing the angelic host, he realised the mistake he had made. Dante's lines run thus :—

[1] Dudden, 358–364.

[2] *De Coel. Hier.* ch. 6–9.

THE CASTLE OF ST. ANGELO.

See page 95.

To face p 272

"E Dionisio con tanto disio
A contemplar questi ordini si mise,
Che li uomò e distinse, com'io.
Ma Gregorio da lui poi si divise:
Onde si tosto, come gli occhi aperse
In questo ciel, di se medesmo rise."
Paradiso, xxviii.; see also Dudden, ii. 361.

In one of the stories told by Gregory in his *Dialogues*, we have a picture of the next world which is apparently the first example of a long series culminating in the wonderful creations of Dante, and which it may be interesting to some to read it as Gregory tells it. I shall give it in the quaint words of a seventeenth-century translator.

"A certain soldier at the time of the recent plague being brought to the point of death, his soul was carried out of his body and lay void of all sense and feeling, but coming quickly again to himself, he told them that were present, what strange things he had seen. He said he saw a bridge, under which a black and murky river did run, that had a filthy and intolerable smell: but upon the farther side thereof there were pleasant green meadows full of sweet flowers, in which there were also divers companies of men apparelled in white: and there was such a delicate savour that the fragrant odour thereof did give wonderful content to all them that dwelt and walked in that place. Divers particular mansions also there were, all shining with brightness and light, and especially one magnificent and sumptuous house, which was a building the brick whereof seemed to be of gold; but whose it was, that he knew not.

"There were also upon the bank of the foresaid river certain houses, but some of them the stinking vapour which rose from the river did touch, and some other it touched not at all. Now those that desired to pass over the said bridge were subject to this manner of trial: if any one that was wicked attempted to go over, down he fell into that dark and stinking river; but those that were just and not hindered by sin, securely and easily passed over to those pleasant and delicate places. Then he said also that he saw Peter, who was steward of the Pope's family and had died some four years before, thrust into a most filthy place, where he was bound and kept down with a great weight of iron: and inquiring why he was so used, he received that answer, which all we that knew his life can affirm to be most true: for it was told him that he suffered that pain, because when himself was upon any occasion to punish others, that he did it more upon cruelty than to show his obedience. Then also he saw a Priest whom he knew, who coming to the foresaid bridge passed over with as great security, as he lived in this world sincerely.

"Likewise on the same bridge he saw Stephen (mentioned by Gregory in a previous story), who being about to go over, his foot slipped, and half his body hanging beside the bridge, he was drawn by the legs downwards of certain terrible men that rose out of the river; and by certain other white and beautiful persons, he was pulled upwards by the

arms. And whilst they strove thus, he that beheld all this strange sight returned to life, not knowing in conclusion what became of him." The Pope, commenting on this, suggests that in the struggle for Stephen's body it was the sins of the flesh that pulled him down while his works of alms plucked him up, but in that secret examination of the supreme judge, which of them had the victory, that neither we know nor he that saw it. Reverting again, he says that "old men and young, girls and boys, did carry the bricks of gold for the house before mentioned, proving," he says, "that those to whom we show compassion in this world will labour for us in the next." He adds that a certain shoemaker called Deusdedit having died, another had a vision about him in which he saw that he had in the next world a house or building, but the workmen worked at it only on Saturday, and on inquiry it was found that when living, all the money he earned during the week which was not spent on his apparel and food, he gave in alms every Saturday at St. Peter's Church, whence it was that his building went forward upon that day.[1]

[1] *Op. cit.* iv. 34, ed. E. G. Gardner, pp. 224, etc. Mr. G. F. Hill says in a note to this story, *id.* p. 224 : This famous and important chapter may be regarded as the germ of the later mediaeval visions of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. The bridge is "the Bridge of Dread," said to be of Oriental origin, which occurs in so many of the later visions of the other world (though not in the *Divina Commedia*) ; this is its first appearance in the West, the Latin version of *The Visio Sancti Pauli*, in which (though not in the original Greek) it also occurs, being later. The sumptuous house of gold is the ultimate source of the empty throne seen preparing (probably for St. Bernard) in the vision of

Let us now turn shortly to Gregory's views on the Sacraments. He does not attempt to supply a doctrine of the conception or number of the Sacraments. He passes the subject over in silence.[1] In regard to the Sacrament of Baptism, which he calls *Sacramentum fidei*, he contends that it completely removes the guilt of original sin. The unbaptized have to suffer for this original stain although they have never committed actual sin. In the case of adults it not only wipes out original sin, but any actual sins committed before the immersion. This seems very inequitable, since children who die before baptism by no fault of their own, and have never committed an actual sin, are devoted to the fires of hell; while grown-up people who have committed a great many sins before they are baptized, have a clean slate made for them by the thaumaturgical qualities of some holy water or of a few sentences pronounced by a priest, and escape all punishment.

That human beings, when mere babes and not yet guilty of actual sin, should be sent for all eternity to hell merely because of the carelessness or wilfulness or ignorance of others, which no action of their own could possibly circumvent, and that this tremendous penalty should be warded off by the

Tundal (*Visio Tungdali*, p. 54), and for Henry VII. (the Emperor in the *Divina Commedia*, *Par.* xxx. 133–8). The episode of the priest who passes safely over the bridge is dramatically expanded in the vision of Tundal (*op. cit.* 15, 27).

[1] Dudden, ii. 414.

quite accidental fact that some well-disposed person was at hand to sprinkle them with water and pronounce the all-potent formula, has been deemed by most men who have tried to define the limits of Eternal Justice and Righteousness, as incommensurable with those qualities as they understand them, and as the *reductio ad absurdum* of theological metaphysics.

In regard to the Eucharist, which Gregory calls *Sacramentum* or *Mysterium Redemptoris*, his teaching has become the standard. He is emphatic in making it not merely a sacrament, but also a sacrifice. He does not, of course, attempt any physical explanation of the mystery. To him the presence, although undefined, was a real presence. It was long after his time when the Schoolmen, with the help of Aristotle, introduced the theory of Transubstantiation. The sacrifice, he holds, is not a mere figurative and commemorative one, but a renewal of the Passion, and it frees the living from temporal suffering and from inconveniences like imprisonment, shipwreck, illness, etc.; while it can also release souls from purgatory.[1] He, on the other hand, makes the exercise of penance and self-sacrifice on the part of the partaker a condition of the efficacy of the Eucharist.

Let me quote a famous passage from the *Dialogues* as illustrating his point of view:—

"This sacrifice," he says, "doth especially save our souls from everlasting damnation, which in

[1] Dudden, iii. 416, 417.

mystery doth renew unto us the death of the Son of God: who, although being risen from death, doth not now die any more, nor death shall any further prevail against him: yet living in himself immortally, and without all corruption, he is again sacrificed for us in this mystery of the holy oblation: for there his body is received, there his flesh is distributed for the salvation of the people: there his blood is not now shed betwixt the bands of infidels, but forced into the mouths of the faithful. Wherefore let us hereby meditate what manner of sacrifice this is, ordained for us, which for our absolution doth always represent the passion of the only Son of God: for what right believing Christian can doubt, that in the very hour of the sacrifice, at the words of the Priest, the heavens be opened, and the quires of angels are present in that mystery of Jesus Christ; that high things are accompanied with low, and earthly joined to heavenly, and that one thing is made of visible and invisible."[1]

Gregory's theory about man's original condition was that he was born with an actual immortality of the soul and a potential immortality of the body, that is to say, that unless he had sinned he would not have had to face death, but his life would have been eternal and unchangeable. He would have known nothing of the necessities of infancy, youth, manhood, or old age, of heat and cold, hunger and thirst, health and disease, nor could he have encountered hope and fear, passion and

[1] *Dialogues*, lib. iv. 58.

desire. Like the angels, he had the privilege of contemplating the Creator. Further, in the presence of temptation, he had the power of choosing between good and evil, and might, if he had willed it, have served either God or the devil. The initial problem of all theology, why man was given this choice instead of having been made incapable of falling, he refused to face. "When the mind," he says, "silently faces such questions, it fears lest by its very audacity in questioning it should break out into pride, and it restrains itself with humility and keeps down its thoughts."[1]

By Gregory the fall of man was accepted in its plain natural sense as it occurs in Genesis, and no attempt was made by him as it was by Augustine to give the story an allegorical and mystical sense. The devil tempted Adam, and Adam yielded voluntarily to him, although he had the power to resist him if he had so willed, and consequently, as the Pope says, "by overthrowing us in our first parent the devil rightfully as it were held man in bondage." Like Augustine, Gregory attributes Adam's fall chiefly to pride. He wished to become like God, not by righteousness, but by power, and secondly by sensuality (the lust after the forbidden fruit).

By his fall he forfeited for the bodies of himself and his descendants the gift of immortality, while his soul and theirs lost the purity and blessedness of its original condition. Secondly, they lost their

[1] *Moralia*, ix. 51.

stability and peace, and became subject to the vicissitudes of life. Thirdly, they lost their spiritual vision, and with it the knowledge of God, the power to contemplate Him and the capacity for apprehending the invisible realities of the spiritual world: they retained the power, however, of discriminating between right and wrong. Lastly, the Fall weakened the human will. Augustine had taught that it only retained the power to choose what is evil (which is no choice at all). Gregory, on the other hand, held that the will was not lost, but so much weakened and crippled that it was no longer able by its own efforts and without the help of grace to do righteous things. He used one of his ever-ready similes to illustrate the conclusion, and compared the weakened will to a caged lioness which, once perfectly free, and having rushed into the cage by its own effort, could not now release itself by its own efforts but only by the hand of grace. A will thus absolutely dependent on another's will as its inspirer, can hardly be called free. Secondly, the Fall initiated the great struggle between the soul and the body; the latter refused to obey the former, and the lusts and passions were let loose. "The only escape was the thorny path of weeping, of obedience, of despising the visible and repressing the appetites."

Gregory held that sin was not a substantial thing which can exist apart from goodness, but the defect and corruption of a good nature. It resulted from the temptation of the devil, and the consent

and acquiescence of the human will. The devil would be powerless without the co-operation of the human will. The devil tempts man with some sin which man finds pleasant and amusing, and he thereupon consents, and every sin begets other sins. He justified the punishment of sins committed in ignorance, since ignorance of the Divine law was originally the result of sin. He classes sins into elaborate categories.

He follows Augustine in treating original sin as the innate corruption of the soul which makes all sin possible, and this corruption of the race was due to the initial corruption of its first progenitor. "When the root became rotten the branches also became rotten." Only baptism, he held, could release from some of the penalties of this original sin. Not all the penalties, however. It could not restore to man the primeval possession of an immortal body. In the case of the unbaptized, God visits the sins of the fathers on the children. Gregory declares that we all are born "children of Gehenna," "condemned sinners," and "infected by sin from our very origin," and children who have exercised no act of will are condemned to everlasting torment for their birth alone. The Saints of the Old Testament were excluded, he held, from paradise after death and kept in Hades without torment until by the descent of Christ they were set free from the taint and admitted to the presence of God. This was, of course, completely inconsistent with Gregory's rigid insistence elsewhere that

without baptism a man cannot see God, and which he applied without flinching to the heathen who had died unbaptized. This inheritance of sin was propagated, according to his teaching, by the carnal desire and its product physical procreation, and this in itself prevented any one born of woman being holy. He does not, however, any more than Augustine, follow this argument to its logical conclusion and condemn wedlock as sinful. If entered upon for producing offspring he deems it lawful, but he treats celibacy as the higher and better state. With Augustine he deems the origin of the soul an unsolved mystery, but favours the view called Traducianism, according to which it is born with the body and equally with the body is the result of procreation, and is not a separate creation of the Almighty (Creationism).

While man, according to Gregory, is born prone to sin and with a corrupt nature, so that even if he does not do sinful things he has sinful thoughts, he deemed these to be the result of unavoidable sin, and therefore different in quality to the sin resulting from consent. It was the wilful committal of sin and the neglect to atone for it which he alone deemed unforgivable.

Man being thus utterly corrupt through both original and actual sin, his malady could only be cured by the Incarnation of Christ, who by His obedience repaired the disobedience of Adam. According to Augustine, the grace of Christ is the only remedy for the fall of man, and nothing

that he can do to save himself will avail him in the least. To this view of his master Gregory did not entirely assent. According to him, there is some merit and virtue in man's *consenting and co-operating will.* The *initiator*, however, of all good he considered to be the precedent and enabling grace of God. Man cannot unaided make the feeblest tentative effort after holiness. He can only help to make the success perfect by rightly using his will. This conclusion is not very logical, it was a compromise with Augustine's non-compromising doctrine of grace which men have found so hard to bear. When analysed, however, it lands us naturally in the same dilemma. Mr. Dudden, to whom I have been under special obligations in this analysis of Gregory's theology, says, "Gregory's position stood midway between pure Augustinianism and semi-Pelagianism. Gregory softened the latter down in the way it was softened down in the famous Canons of Orange.

"This compromise, transmitted by Gregory to the Middle Ages, found general acceptance, but strict Augustinianism at all times had its adherents and obtained a new and important development at the Reformation. By the majority, however, the semi-Augustinian compromise of Gregory has been preferred." The compromise was a very thin one, for Gregory is almost as savagely persistent as Luther in affirming that God does not bestow grace on man because he has done good works,

but in order that he may do good works, and he holds that grace is in no wise earned but is given freely, and the sole reason for the gift is the inscrutable will of God. When once given, however, Divine grace works within man merits which God rewards, which means, in fact, that God rewards His own handiwork. The argument is clearly a circular one. Gregory, while holding this view, held further that this initiating grace (known as Prevenient Grace) which "disposes a man to will the good he willed not" is followed by subsequent grace which enables him to do the good he wills. The Prevenient Grace, he held, emancipates the will, and then co-operates with it, while Augustine treats it as irresistibly determined by the dominating grace. It is hard to see how Gregory's "Will" can be defined as free. Its acts are in every case described as consequential and as resulting from an initial impulse from the Divine Will.

Augustine's theory of grace was, like Calvin's, free from all doubt and hesitation, and it led him straight to an equally rigid and, may I say, equally revolting theory of predestination. According to this view the Maker and Father of mankind elected from among His human creatures a certain and fixed number to whom He imparted His saving grace, while all the rest He left in their own wickedness, passing them over so that they earned damnation. Both the elect and the damned had their fate therefore fixed long before, and each section were working out in their lives what had been irrevocably

settled long before in the secret counsels of God. It makes no difference to this awful conclusion whether the Almighty's so-called reprobation was active, or merely passive and indifferent. His responsibility was the same. Gregory was doubtless loath to adopt such a terrible conclusion in its naked plainness, but he has no solution of it which is not contradictory or factitious. At one time he argues that God's grace was freely offered to all. In one place, however, he interprets the definite statement in 1 Tim. ii. 4, as Augustine does, *i.e.* as meaning not that God offers it to all men, but that inasmuch as it is offered to men of every *class* and *character*, therefore it is given to all men, which is a subterfuge.[1] At another time he seems willing to adopt the older theory, that God elects those whom He foresees will persevere in faith and good works. Inasmuch as this very perseverance, however, was by his theory due to the grace of God and is not possible without it, it only means that God foresees the result of His own future grace, which is a mere delusive fallacy of logic. He himself in another place offers an argument against this theory of "*praedestinatio ex praevisis meritis*" as it was called, namely, the difficulty, if it were true, of equating the damnation of unbaptized infants with the absolute justice of God.

"Two little ones," he says, "come to the light. To one it is granted to return to redemption by baptism; the other is taken away before it is washed by the regenerating water. And the son

[1] *Moralia*, vi. 21.

of believing parents is often cut off without faith, while that of unbelievers is often removed by the grant of the Sacrament of faith. Perhaps some may say that God knew that the former would act wickedly even after baptism, and on that account did not bring him to the grace of baptism. But if this is so, then undoubtedly we have an instance of sins being punished even before they are committed, and what right-thinking man could say that Almighty God, who releases some from the sins they have committed, yet condemns in others these very sins even when not committed."[1] This argument seems very hard to answer, and it led to Gregory eventually falling back on Augustine's more logical, if more terrible and to simple minds more inexplicable, conclusion, that if by any accident or fault or design on the part of its parents or guardians, a child fails to have a few drops of water sprinkled on it while a certain formula is uttered, that child is damned without hope to all eternity. A good many people would, it may be hoped, even in the sixth century, prefer to silently believe that a stupendous mystification underlies a postulate so cruel and so contrary to the defined attributes of God as the loving Father of man and the Dispenser of love and mercy.

Justly, we do not distinguish between pushing a man into the water and letting him alone when there if we can save him. His blood is equally on our hands. It is little use to lay down a monstrous proposition like this and then to say that the matter

[1] *Moralia*, xxvii. 7.

ought not to be discussed, since one thing is alone certain, namely, that nothing can be unjust which is done by the Just One, and that the whole matter is a mystery. The real mystery is that a good and able man should deliberately argue that the Pattern of all goodness was thus constituted, and should then further argue that God shows mercy to the elect without justice, and justice to the reprobate without mercy. The elect as well as the reprobate must experience God's justice, if He be just.[1]

Thus did these good Fathers spin their cobwebs and exhaust their dialectical ingenuity in trying to solve the insoluble and to define the indefinable. The problem of free will and determinism is as hopeless in theology as it has proved itself to be in philosophy, and to get round the interminable antinomies in which logic loses itself when it deals with such a subject is like trying to settle whether space has or has not limits. Its definite settlement seems to be beyond the reach of human wisdom, but the human heart and the human conscience nevertheless con-

[1] It will be well to quote a paragraph from the *Dialogues* to show Gregory's method in these very abstract fields. Gregory having told his companion Peter a story, the latter inferred from it that such as be of great merit and in favour with God can sometimes obtain those things which be not predestinate; whereupon Gregory replies: "Such things as be not predestinate by God cannot by any means be obtained at His hands; but those things which holy men do by their prayers effect, were from all eternity predestinate to be obtained by prayers. For very predestination itself to life everlasting is so by Almighty God disposed. God's elect servants do through their labour come to it, in that by their prayers they do merit to receive that which Almighty God determines before all worlds to bestow on them." He then quotes Gen. xxi. 12, xxvii. 29, xxii. 17, and xxv. 21 (*Dialogues*, i. 6).

tinue to revolt against the notion that the best efforts of the most ideal men count for nothing in the scheme by which rewards and punishments are awarded by the Fountain of all justice; which is Augustine's intolerable paradox. The mass of men will continue to lean to the opposite view, and will still cherish the motive which caused Gregory to separate even only a little from his master Augustine in this matter, although few of them can sanction his arguments or adopt his actual conclusion.

Dr. Bury condenses another aspect of Gregory's theology in a few telling sentences, for which he acknowledges obligations to Toepffel. He says: "In doctrine he followed the respectable authority of the founder of Latin theology, St. Augustine. But theology was the Pope's weak point; here the coarse fibres of his nature are apparent, his want of philosophy, his want of taste. Take, for instance, his theory of the Redemption. Influenced by familiarity with the ideas of the Roman law, men were prone to look on the Redemption as a sort of legal transaction between God and the devil, in which the devil is overreached. Gregory, true to the piscatorial associations of the first Bishop of Rome, presents this idea in a new, original, and definite form. It is easy to identify Leviathan in Job with the Evil One; and once this identification is made, it is obvious that the redemption must have been a halieutic transaction, in which God is evidently the fisherman. On His hook He places the humanity of Jesus as a bait, and when the Devil swallows it the hook

pierces his jaws . . . this grotesque conception is put forward earnestly, not as a mere play of the imagination."[1]

I have here collected some of the chief matters in which Gregory's influence upon theological thought was profound and definite. Those who wish to read a masterly account of his theology as a whole I must remit to the volumes of Mr. Dudden. I cannot improve upon the summary with which he concludes his admirable work.

"The importance of the teaching of the Fourth Doctor of the Latin Church," he says, "lies mainly in its popular summarisation of the doctrine of Augustine, and in its detailed exposition of various religious conceptions which were current in the Western Church, but had not hitherto been defined with precision. On the other hand, Gregory provided what may be termed a popular version of Augustine. That is to say, he restated his views in simple, unphilosophic form, and at the same time toned some of them down in the interests of natural piety. Thus, for example, the doctrine of God is reproduced in simple language, and the doctrine of Grace is modified in the practical interest by the vigorous assertion of the freedom of the will. So popularised, Augustinianism was erected into a standard by Gregory, and thus passed over to the Middle Ages. On the other hand, Gregory was the first to give clear expression to many current religious conceptions which had been hitherto im-

[1] *Op. cit.* ii. 157.

perfectly defined, as, for instance, the conception of Purgatory or of the Eucharistic sacrifice. In his exposition of such ideas he made a distinct advance upon the older theology, and influenced profoundly the dogmatic development of the future.

"The combination of Augustinianism with the conceptions of the popular religion, thus effected by Gregory, is the ground of the system of mediæval Catholicism. The Schoolmen worked on Gregory's material. They analysed his theology, restated his propositions in scientific form, and endeavoured to reconcile them to the understanding by elaborate dialectical proofs. Doctrine, as was natural, developed in the process, and the schemes of Scholasticism present many points of contrast with the teaching of the *Morals* and the *Homilies*. Yet it should be borne in mind that it is on Gregory's work that these later systems in the main are based. It is the ideas and doctrines emphasised by him, that afterwards became of first-rate importance in the Church. . . . Gregory's theology is important in the history of dogma: yet we do not find in it new ideas or the settlement of difficult questions. But he does sum up the teaching of the older Fathers and brings it into union with the opinion of his time. He does consolidate and strengthen the Catholicism he found, preparing the matter for future elaboration. . . . He gives to theology a tone and an emphasis which cannot be disregarded. And from his time to that of Anselm no teacher of equal eminence arose in the Church. For a period of

nearly four centuries the last word on theology rested with Gregory the Great."[1]

It is important, in view of modern theories about papal infallibility, to remember some facts about Gregory's dogmatic position. We have seen that, while agreeing in the main with his master, another Doctor of the Church, namely, Augustine, he very considerably qualified the latter's views about such critical matters as the responsibility of man for his acts and the freedom of his will. He revolted apparently from the terrible fatalism which really underlies Augustine's views on the subject, but he did so by forms of logic which have been generally deemed unsound and are obviously elusive and inconsequent. He accepted Augustine's premises in their fulness, and tried to soften them in their application by methods which are obviously delusive, if not disingenuous. 'The fact is, Gregory was a great moralist but a poor philosopher, and in trying to make Augustine's theories more palatable he involved himself in self-contradictions which his master, if then living, would have pierced through and through with his very effective lance. The real truth is, that it is Augustine's premises which are at fault and not his conclusions, which is equally true of Augustine's greatest pupil, Calvin, who in much later times shrank from no application of his mechanical logic. They both pressed the case to a revolting conclusion, which compelled them to treat Divine Justice, Mercy, and Rectitude as the very converse

[1] *Op. cit.* ii. 442, 443.

of the abstractions we connote by the same terms when we make them the bases of Human Morality.

Who, then, is to judge between Augustine and Gregory, and between both of them and the demands of the human conscience in such an issue? To those who have accepted papal infallibility it is apparently a necessity that they should follow the Pope, who was a Church Doctor, rather than his master, the African Bishop, who was also a Doctor of the Church. Yet it would be difficult to find in the history of the dogmatic teaching of the Roman Church on the subject of Gregory's theory of qualified free will or of grace, evidence that it has accepted either his arguments or his conclusions on these subjects.

This is not all; there are other matters in which Gregory's position, when measured by the accepted Church teaching, savours of heresy. Thus, as Mr. Dudden says, Gregory, while cherishing the Chalcedonian formulas, cherished also views on the Incarnation distinctly Doketic in tendency.[1] In respect to the ignorance of Christ as man, Gregory asserts the Doketic views without the slightest ambiguity. His statements regarding Christ's mental anguish and His temptation are less explicit, but their general tenor seems to be to the same effect.[2] He would not tolerate any human limitation to Christ's human omniscience, a view which is not now received by the Roman Church. As we shall see, in one of his answers to the questions of the

[1] *Op. cit.* ii. 293. [2] *Ib.* 329–331.

later Augustine, Gregory, in regard to the degree of consanguinity within which marriage is permissible, created much trouble, and was repudiated by the Church, while some forged letters under the name of Felix of Messina were produced in order to do away with the effect of the Pope's unwary pronouncement.

The prayers which the Pope offered for the delivery of the pagan Emperor Hadrian's soul from hell, as attested by some very early records of his miracles, and in many works of art, were generally deemed quite unorthodox by subsequent writers of authority. His biographer, John, had to try and excuse them; so did Thomas Aquinas.

It is plain, therefore, that either Gregory was mistaken in his published opinions as Pope on very important dogmatic questions, and was not therefore infallible, or else that the Roman Church has erred in following other teachers.

CHAPTER IX

In the last chapter we saw to what critical and almost inconceivable lengths Gregory pursued his own premises in interpreting the ways of Providence; there still remains to be considered a notable example of his character, *i.e.* his extraordinary intolerance at times. No word so well describes what I mean. With him no thought was more firmly fixed than that salvation was to be found in the Church alone. Heretics and schismatics "being severed from the Church were also separated from Christ, and were outside the sphere of operation of the Holy Spirit." Hence they could not hope for salvation, which was to be found only within the Church. He said "the Holy Universal Church proclaims that God cannot truly be worshipped save within herself," and asserted that all they who were without her pale would never be saved.[1] No sacrifices were accepted by God,[2] no prayers were heard,[3] no forgiveness of sin was obtained, save through the merits and intercession of the one Catholic Church.[4] "For it is the Church alone through which God willingly accepts a sacrifice, the Church alone which intercedes with

[1] *Moralia*, xiv. 5.
[2] *Ib.* Pref. 17.
[3] *Ib.* xxxv. 12.
[4] *Ib.* xviii. 42.

confidence for those that are in error. The true sacrifice of the Redeemer was offered only in the one Catholic Church. It is in the Church alone that a good work is faithfully carried on. It is the Church alone which guards those who are within it by the strong bond of charity, and in which we truly contemplate heavenly mysteries, for truth shines forth from the Catholic Church alone."[1] "Good works, innocence and obedience, perfection and eternal life, are not to be had by any who are outside the Church."[2] "Even the merit of martyrdom is denied them. For though heretics and schismatics suffer in the name of Christ, they are not purified by their suffering. Their sins are punished but not purged away, and all their torment is void of merit or saving efficacy."[3]

"Hence, though a man displays heroic deeds, faith of a sort, and even miracles, he is none the less without hope of salvation, if he be not joined to the one Church, which gives the saving stamp to all." The Church, Gregory held, was not only Holy and Catholic, but Apostolic, "of Apostolic foundation, and connected with the Apostles by an uninterrupted episcopal succession,"[4] and the only authority for doctrine. "Though her dogmas have been gradually elaborated, they are all based on the teaching of the Apostles."[5] The custodian and

[1] *Moralia*, xxxv. 13.

[2] *Ib.* xxxv. 33, and *Greg. Exp. Sup. Cant. Canticorum*, vi. 9.

[3] *Moralia*, xviii. 41, 42. "*Martyrem non facit poena sed causa.*" *E. and H.* ii. 49.

[4] *Moralia*, iv. 61 and 62.

[5] *Ib.* xxvii. 14 and 15.

interpreter of Holy Scripture, she alone can explain the obscurities of the Old Testament[1] and draw out the full meaning of the brief testimonies of the New,[2] for she alone is gifted with wisdom[3] from on high. Unlike the heretics, she makes no pretence to hidden or cryptic knowledge. She requires that men should receive her decisions on things that cannot be comprehended by reason, with faith. "Many of her doctrines she cannot herself understand;[4] others she deliberately refuses to elucidate, that men may not be puffed up with intellectual pride." "She asks her sons to accept her dogmas with unquestioning faith, every act of faith being thus an act of obedience."[5] Mr. Dudden has in these pregnant sentences,[6] each supported by a quotation, admirably condensed for us the haughty and imperious demands made by Gregory on behalf of his Church. No wonder he should have had nothing but scorn for heretics and schismatics, and no wonder that his teaching on this subject should form the bone and marrow of modern Encyclicals and Syllabuses, and that all advances in our own day for peace or brotherhood or union, on any terms but unqualified surrender, from those outside her fold should have been met by contemptuous scorn. It is plain that there is no method of equating differences of this kind except absolute domination on one side and absolute submission on the other. The true father of the intolerance and

[1] *E. and H.* ix. 26.
[2] *Moralia*, xxvii. 14, 15.
[3] *Ib.* xviii. 18.
[4] *Ib.* xiv. 32.
[5] *Ib.* xx. 2.
[6] Dudden, ii. 405–414.

bigotry and exclusiveness of the mediæval Church and its Roman successor in our day was Gregory. He was eminently fair-minded and judicial, save where schism and heresy were in question, when he shaped the prejudices of succeeding ages in their full rigour—feeling, no doubt, that in the face of enemies pressing the Church on all sides, he who rent the garment was the worst of traitors.

He was a warm champion of the union of Church and State. "The latter," he taught, "should work for the furtherance of Divine law and worship. Earthly rulers were entrusted with the duty of preserving the *pax fidei*. Theirs it was to maintain law and order in the Church, to guard its secular interests, and to compel its enemies, whether pagans, schismatics, or heretics, to submit to its authority."[1] He summed up his view on the respective provinces of the civil and religious jurisdiction in his rule, "*Quod vero fecit fecerit, si canonicum est, sequimur: si vero canonicum non est, in quantum sine peccato nostro, portamus.*"[2]

Towards pagans and Jews he acted very much like other Christians in authority in his time. Pagans, like heretics, were treated much more hardly than Jews. Pagan tenants, Gregory held, might be persecuted and have intolerable exactions imposed on them to compel their conversion.[3] Idolaters and diviners were to be reclaimed: if freemen by imprisonment, and if slaves by stripes and torture.

[1] Dudden, ii. 413.
[2] *E. and H.* xi. 29.
[3] *Ib.* iv. 26.

He is found writing to the Bishop of Cagliari, pressing upon him to cause the idolatrous peasants in Sardinia who were serfs of the Church to be baptized by force, and to fine those who were refractory; while he similarly pressed upon the Emperor to execute the severe decrees issued by his predecessors against the Donatists.

Jews were treated by him with a good deal more tenderness than pagans or heretics. We shall see presently that he was very stringent against their dealing in Christian slaves, otherwise his regulations about them were generally humane. Jews, however, were not allowed to proselytise or build new synagogues. On the other hand, he insisted that they should not be coerced into receiving baptism or molested in the synagogues they already had. When tenants of the Holy See, they might be bribed, however, to change their faith by the offer of lower rents.[1]

This form of bribery was done quite undisguisedly. Thus Gregory, writing to Cyprian the Rector in Sicily in regard to the Jews living on the lands of the Church, tells him to advertise the fact widely that whoever among them was converted should have the burdens of his holding lightened, and this was to be done by a regular system. One who paid a solidus in rent was to have a third remitted. If three or four, he was to have one solidus deducted. If still more, proportionately. The Pope argues that such transactions would not

[1] *E. and H.* ii. 38, v. 7.

be unprofitable, since by these payments the Jews would be brought to the grace of Christ; and even if they themselves came with little faith, he artfully argues that those born of them would be baptized with more faith, so that in any case they or their children would be won.[1] In another letter to the sub-Deacon Anthemius he urges that Jewish converts should be helped with money when in want, and he specifies a certain Justa and her sons as deserving recipients.[2]

He also deprecates harsh treatment of Jews. Thus he writes to Bacauda and Agnellus, two bishops in Sicily, saying that the Jews at Terracina had petitioned him in regard to their synagogue at that place. It seems this synagogue was so near the church that the sound of the psalmody from the former reached the latter. His agent, Peter, was to inquire into the case, and if he found that this proximity was really a nuisance he was to secure the Jews a fresh site. In another letter, to Paschasius, he forbade the Jews to be oppressed or vexed unreasonably, since they were permitted in accordance with justice to live under the protection of the Roman laws, and they ought to be allowed to keep their observances as they had learnt them without hindrance.[3] Again, he writes to Fantinus the Defensor that the Jews of Panormus (*i.e.* Palermo) had complained that their synagogues, with the guest-chambers that were

[1] *E. and H.* iv. 36; Barmby, v. 8.
[2] *E. and H.* v. 46; Barmby, iv. 31.
[3] *E. and H.* ii. 6, xiii. 15; Barmby, i. 10, xiii. 12.

under them or attached to their walls, and the gardens adjoining, together with their books and ornaments, had been wrongfully appropriated by the Church officials. He ordered that due amends should be made.[1]

In a second letter to Fantinus, Gregory tells him he had heard from the Lady Abbess of the Monastery of St. Stephen at Agrigentum that many Jews wished to be converted, but it was necessary that some one should go there from the Pope. Gregory therefore bids him hasten thither. If he found them anxious to be baptized, as the Paschal solemnity was some time off and they might in the meantime change their minds, he was to consult about it with the bishop there. Penitence and abstinence (*poenitentia et abstinentia*) having been prescribed to them for forty days, he might baptize them under the protection of the mercy of God on a Lord's Day, or on any very noted festival that might occur; and if he found that some of them were too poor to buy christening vestments, he might charge their price in his accounts. If they, however, wished to put off the ceremony till Easter, he was to arrange with the bishop so that they might for the present become catechumens, while he meanwhile visited them frequently and made exhortations to them. He ends by asking the Defensor to send full details of what should occur.[2]

In a letter to Libertinus, the prætor of Sicily,

[1] *E. and H.* ix. 38; Barmby, ix. 55.
[2] *E. and H.* viii. 23; Barmby, viii. 23.

Gregory complains of "a very wicked Jew" called Nasas, who had erected an altar in the name of the blessed Elias, and had enticed many Christians to worship there. He was to inquire and to punish him.[1] We elsewhere find the Pope rebuking the Roman people for the Judaising practice of teaching that Saturday rather than Sunday was to be kept as the Christian Sabbath, which was apparently affected by certain of them.[2]

Gregory's life had been a long struggle against sickness, which greatly emaciated his once full body; he suffered, like most of his contemporaries, from gout, from indigestion, and from malarial fever, which were no doubt aggravated by his austerities, and he was troubled with fainting fits. He was, nevertheless, indefatigable. He "never rested" is the graphic phrase of his biographer, Paul.[3] Mr. Dudden condenses for us the kind of engagements which occupied his days: "Now he was called upon to give audience to an envoy from Constantinople, now to preside over the trial of an accused bishop, now to dictate some minute directions to the governor of one of the papal patrimonies. Sometimes schismatics or heretics came to Rome to consult the orthodox Pope and hear his arguments. Monks came to complain of the oppression of their diocesans, bishops to obtain advice in managing their dioceses, soldiers and civil officials, ambassadors from the Lombards or the Franks,

[1] *E. and H.* iii. 37; Barmby, iii. 38.
[2] *E. and H.* xiii. 3.
[3] *Vita*, 15.

messengers from the Exarch, priests, abbots, Jews, slaves, women, crowded his antechambers and clamoured for his attentions."[1] To each and all he was accessible, and ever ready to apply his ready wit and his sound sense and judgment to remedy the pressing evil.

The combination of a fragile body and strenuous life, with a continuous residence in the malarious district of the Lateran (for he never seems to have left Rome after he became Pope), had a natural consequence. Gregory's career was a short one, and he died on the 12th of March 604, after a reign of thirteen years, six months, and ten days as Pope.[2] He was buried, as was customary, on the day of his death, in the "porticus" or chapel of the basilica of St. Peter, in front of the sacristy (*ante secretarium*).[3] His body was placed, as was usual with great personages, in an Egyptian porphyry basin (*Conca Ægyptiaca*).[4] Two hundred years later it was removed by his successor and namesake, Gregory the Fourth, to an oratory near the new sacristy within the church, and his tomb was covered with silver panels and its back wall with golden mosaics.[5]

Subsequent translations took place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the remains having been removed to a cypress coffin, now

[1] *Op. cit.* i. 244, quoting the *Hom. in Ez.* i. 11, paragraphs 6 and 26.
[2] See the discussion of the date in Plummer's *Bede*, vol. ii. p. 36.
[3] *Lib. Pont. Greg. I.*
[4] Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, 223.
[5] *Lib. Pont. Greg. IV.*

rest beneath the altar in the Chapel of Clement the Eighth, to which they were transferred on 8th January 1606. His epitaph, cited by Bede, has been attributed to Peter Oldradus, Archbishop of Milan and secretary to Pope Hadrian the First, but in an Italian note to *Gregorovius* we read: "*Dell' iscrizione incisa sulla tomba si conoscera il tenore per copia fatte fino nel secolo vii: non se, cognosce lautore; ma non fu certo l'arcivescovo Oldradio.*" It consists of sixteen hexameters, and six small fragments of it have been recently recovered, and are preserved in the subterranean church of St. Peter.[1] The last six lines of the epitaph may be quoted. After belauding the Pope in various ways, it continues:—

Ad Christum Anglos convertit pietate magistra,
Adquirens fidei agmina gente nova.
Hic labor, hoc studium, haec tibi cura, hoc pastor agebas,
Ut Domino offerres plurima lucra gregis,
Hisque Dei Consul factus laetare triumphis;
Nam mercedem operum jam sine fide tenes.

The phrase "Dei Consul" (Consul of God) should be noted here.

The two concluding lines are not given by Bede. They run:—

Hic requiescit Gregorius Papa qui sedit annos
xiii menses vi dies x—Depositus iiii idus—Martias.[2]

It is a notable instance of what I previously mentioned, that men were often dubbed saints without having had any official appointment, that so famous a man as Gregory should have acquired

[1] *Gregorovius*, i. p. 419, note 42. [2] *E. and H.* vol. ii. App. V.

the style simply on account of his widely recognised reputation for sanctity. Thus in the life of him by the Whitby Monk we read: "*Iste* [*i.e.* Gregory] *enim sanctus utique per omnem terram tam sanctus habetur, ut semper ab omnibus ubique Sanctus Gregorius nominatur. Unde letaniis . . . Sanctum Gregorium nobis in amminiculum vocamus, cum sanctis scilicet apostolis et martyribus, inter quos eum in coelis Christo credimus conjunctum.*"[1]

The evidence that the Pope's remains still remain in St. Peter's at Rome is very satisfactory, but it is not the only story about them.

According to a very improbable saga, reported by Odilo the Monk in his tract on the translation of the remains of SS. Sebastianus and Gregory, Roidinus, the Prior of St. Medard, bribed the sacristans of St. Peter's, opened the tomb of St. Gregory, and carried the body off to Soissons, where it was claimed to have been, by many writers. St. Thomas of Canterbury made a pilgrimage thither to invoke the help of "the Apostle of the Church of England who lyeth in the same town entombed," and it was said to have been destroyed by the Huguenots. This story is inconsistent with the better witness of the Pope's own biographers.[2]

Although the body as a whole is generally admitted to have remained in Rome, there are many claims in many places to the possession of disintegrated fragments of it. Three several heads—one at Sens, another at Prague, a third at Lisbon,

[1] *Op. cit.* ed. Gasquet, p. 45. [2] Dudden, ii. 274.

and portions of a fourth at Cologne—all attest the extravagant credulity of relic-hunters. The virtue of the larger bones was distributed by having them further broken and made to do service elsewhere; thus the upper part of the skull and another bone are said to be in the treasury of the Cathedral at Sens. A portion of this latter skull was begged by Pope Urban the Eighth in 1628, and presented by him to the Roman oratory of St. Maria in Vallicella, where it still remains. When the Cathedral of Avignon was rededicated in the last century, a piece of this last bone was detached and presented to the church there, at the instance of Pope Gregory the Sixteenth. This is not all. Mr. Dudden has collected a number of notices of other relics of the marvellous Pope, which I will in part appropriate. He says: "In the great sack of Rome in 1527, a crystal vase containing an arm of the Saint is said to have been stolen. One of his arms is claimed for St. Gregory's Monastery at Rome, and another for Cambray. One of his hands is said to be in the Cathedral of Cesena, and a finger bone at St. Pantaleone in Cologne. The Carthusians in the same city possess a tooth and a large and small bone, and the Jesuits in Lisbon had other relics. In Spain there was formerly a picture of the Virgin, which, it was said, had been presented by St. Gregory to his friend Leander, the Archbishop of Seville. A piece of his dalmatic is said to be at St. Stephen's in Bologna. An ivory crozier, said to have been the great Pope's, was presented to St. Gregory's Church by Gregory

the Sixteenth."[1] In a letter of Pope Vitalian it is said that he sent some relics of Gregory to Oswy, King of Northumbria.[2] At Monza there is a very early Antiphonary said to have been presented by Pope Gregory to Queen Theodelinda.[3]

The artists of the Middle Ages usually associated the apostles, saints, and martyrs with some symbolic object by which they can be recognised. Gregory is generally represented in his papal dress and tiara, accompanied by a dove, a book, or an angel playing a musical instrument.

A chapel was dedicated to St. Gregory at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, where Mass was recited every Sunday at the altar of the Saint.[4] Another chapel (*porticus*) was dedicated to him in the Church of St. Peter at York.[5] There was also a church dedicated to him in London.[6] An altar dedicated to him was erected in very early times at Whitby, as is stated in his life by the Whitby Monk.

The deeds and the alleged miracles of the Pope, or connected with his name, afforded abundant inspiration to the artists, both painters and sculptors, of the Middle Ages and of more modern times. It will be well to refer to some of the most noted. Among these the greatest favourite was the Pope's rescue of the soul of the Emperor Trajan from torment. The story as reported by the Whitby Monk relates that one day, when traversing the Forum of Trajan, the Pope recalled a work of such charity (*tam elemo-*

[1] *Op. cit.* ii. 275, 276.
[2] *Bede*, iii. chap. xxxix.
[3] Marriott, *Vest. Christ.* 237.
[4] *Bede*, ii. 3.
[5] *Ib.* ii. 20.
[6] *Ib.* ed. Plummer, vol. i. p. cxxv.

sinarium) done by the Emperor who built it, that he deemed him to have been more of a Christian than a pagan. As the Emperor was setting out on an expedition with his army, he was importuned by a widow, who said, "My Lord Trajan, here are men who killed my son and refuse to give me anything." "Wait till I return," he said, "and I will make them give you redress." To which she said, "But, my lord, if you never return no one will do justice to me." He thereupon summoned the wrong-doers, and made them pay her a recompense. Gregory, remarking on this, said that it was the very case contemplated in Isaiah i. 17 and 18, "Judge the fatherless and plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord." Since he did not know what to do for the refreshment of such a man's soul; through the influence of Christ working within him, he went to St. Peter and poured forth his accustomed flood of tears until it was divinely communicated to him that his petition for his release had been heard. But it was also conveyed to him that he should never presume again to do such thing for any other pagan (*unde per eum quem in se habuit Christum loquentem, ad refrigerium anime ejus quid implendo nesciebat, ingrediens ad Sanctum Petrum solita direxit laerimarum fluenta, usque dum promeruit sibi divinitus revelatum fuisse exauditum, atque ut nunquam de altero illud presumpsisset pagano*).[1] This miracle

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 39. In more than one of the tales quoted by my friend Mr. Herbert in his most industrious book, the third volume of the *British Museum Catalogue of Romances*, pp. 400, 401,

was afterwards felt to be embarrassing, and was repudiated on the ground that Trajan had died a pagan; and it was therefore deemed shocking that a Pope should have appealed in tears to St. Peter to release him from the torments of hell. Gregory's biographer, John the Deacon, suggests that the story was an English one, and would make the English responsible for it—"*Legitur enim penes easdem Anglorum ecclesias.*" The anonymous Whitby Monk, from whom I have quoted it, on the other hand, clearly derives the story from Italy. He begins it with the words, "*Quidam quoque de nostris dicunt narratum a Romanis,*" and himself cites it as extraordinary, since no unbaptized person can see God. As he says: "*Nemo enim sine baptismo Deum videbit unquam.*"[1]

Secondly, we have the miracle of the bleeding cloth, above described, which was originally told of Leo the Great.[2]

Thirdly, that of a noble Roman lady, who used to present bread of her own making for consecration in the Mass, and was seen to smile when told this bread was the Lord's body. The Pope, to strengthen her faith, prayed that a miracle might be vouchsafed, whereupon, when the Host on the altar was uncovered, it was said to have been clearly changed into material flesh stained with blood.

and 630 and 638, it is said that Gregory was offered a choice of penalties for praying for Trajan's soul. Mr. Herbert has also directed me to an elaborate monograph on the legend by M. Gaston Paris, in the *Bibl. de l'école des Hautes Études*, fasc. 35 (1878), pp. 261–298.

[1] *Vide op. cit.* chap. xxix. [2] *Vide ante*, p. 226.

The Pope having prayed again, the flesh was again converted into bread.

Fourthly, the cure of the Lombard King, who had promised Gregory that if the latter ever became Pope he would not molest the city of Rome. Gregory bade him return to the food of his childhood—*i.e.* a milk diet—by which he was cured. We should hardly call this a miracle now. It clearly refers to the time before he became Pope.

A fifth miracle reported of the Pope was of a more grim character. He had excommunicated a rich and powerful man who had divorced his wife. The latter thereupon bribed two *magi*, or necromancers, to do the Pope an injury. By their diabolic arts they caused a demon to enter the horse Gregory was riding, so that it became very excited, and put him in great danger. He succeeded, however, in discomfiting the *magi*, who confessed and were converted.

Lastly, the miracle reported in reference to his successor as Pope, namely, Sabinianus, who joined in, or perhaps incited, a popular outcry against him after his death, and attributed a famine which occurred, to his extravagance. Sabinian did not mend matters by withdrawing the free doles which his predecessor had distributed, from the monasteries, guest-houses, deaconries, and hospitals. In answer to the appeals of the poor, he replied, "If Gregory for the glory of his own praise entertained all the people, I cannot afford to do the same." Thereupon, we are told, Gregory appeared to him

three times and gently admonished him, and as he persisted he paid him another visit, when he violently abused and even struck the offending Pope on the head, from the effects of which blow he shortly afterwards died.[1] In the Whitby Life we have an epitomised version of the story, in which Gregory is said to have kicked his successor on the head with his foot.[2]

John the Deacon tells the story rather differently. He says that the people were so enraged against Gregory's memory that they determined to burn his books. Thereupon his secretary, Peter, told them a tale in order to dissuade them. This story is better put by Gregory's earlier biographer, Paul, who says: "Peter the Deacon, Gregory's close friend and protégé, declared that when the Pope was composing his commentary on the prophecies of Ezekiel, a veil was drawn between them. As the Pope kept silence for a long time, Peter, who was acting as his secretary, made a hole with his pen in the veil, and, looking through it, he saw a dove whiter than snow sitting on Gregory's head and holding its beak for a long time to his lips, as if conveying a message. When the dove withdrew its bill the Pope began to speak again, and Peter went on transcribing. This happened more than once, and on one occasion he saw Gregory with hands and eyes raised to heaven as if in prayer, receiving as before the dove's beak between his lips." This naïve and beautiful story, no

[1] *Paul. Diac.*, chap. xxix. [2] *Op. cit.* chap. xxviii.

doubt, was the origin of the dove being treated in art as the special symbol of the Pope. It occurs in the alleged interpolated portion of Paul the Deacon's Life of Gregory, and is doubtless either an enlargement of that told in the Whitby Life or was taken from the original form of that Life.

Peter having told the crowd this story, further confirmed its truth by a very solemn oath, and, entering the *ambo*, or pulpit, with the Gospels in his hand, he prayed God to take his life if the story was not true. After repeating the statement he suddenly died. This, we are told, was accepted as an attestation of the truth of the legend, which does not seem quite consequential.

The six miracles here related are especially noteworthy for us, since they occur for the first time in the biography of the Whitby Monk, from which they were perhaps derived by Paul the Deacon, while John, Gregory's third biographer, expressly says that four of them—*i.e.* those of the bleeding "host," of the bleeding cloth, of the release of Trajan, and of the image—were stories specially current in the English Church. He adds several tales of visions in which, after his death, the Pope is made to appear to several monks of St. Andrew's Monastery, including, on one occasion, himself.[1]

Gregory's unpopularity with the Roman people was only transient. Their memories speedily reverted to the many obligations they were under to him, and his biographer, John, tells us how they kept

[1] *Op. cit.* iv. 100.

his feast, and on the vigil went in crowds to his tomb and affectionately kissed his unembroidered pallium of white linen, his girdle of a thumb's breadth, and his silver phylacta hung by a piece of red cloth, which were all in existence when he wrote.[1] They also visited their wrath on Sabinian, whose body had to be furtively conveyed from the Lateran to its burial by skirting the outside of the city, so as to escape the fury of the mob.

If we have found much to distress us in the theological and dogmatic views of Gregory, which became the great armoury of Scholasticism and the inspiration of the methods and theories of the Inquisition, we cannot say enough in praise of his moral and ethical teaching. Directly we get him on this ground, we feel what grandeur there is in the man. Here he towers above the whole crowd of theologians, and takes us to a higher atmosphere where the air is pure and fresh, and untainted by sordid thoughts and views, and makes us feel how mean all vice is, how contemptible is all pretence and hypocrisy, and how necessary faith, love, and good works are if we are to attain righteousness. He never misses an occasion in his homilies, and in his great work on Job, of urging that theology without morals is mere dust and ashes, as are asceticism, long prayers, or fasting, etc. etc., without real humility and contrition. Let me again borrow from Mr. Dudden some references which my readers would do well to look up and ponder over, *e.g.* his analyses of

[1] *Op. cit.* iv. 80.

the virtues of fortitude,[1] humility,[2] truthfulness,[3] obedience,[4] the uses of adversity,[5] the relation of the active to the contemplative life,[6] his definition of different kinds of temptation,[7] of the ascetic mean ;[8] the causes of sin,[9] and his account of the conception, birth, and growth of good in man.[10] "These subjects," says Mr. Dudden, "are handled by Gregory with an easy mastery, which proves him to have been a moral theologian of high rank. No Early Father better understood the human soul or analysed more clearly its miseries and necessities, or indicated more pointedly the remedies that should be applied."[11] Another sentence from Dr. Barmby will emphasise all this. He says: "As a preacher of essential Christian morality he was ever sound and true, nor has any one more insisted on spiritual communion of the individual soul with God, or more strongly maintained the principle of justice, mercy, and truth being of the essence of religion."[12]

A good deal has been made of Gregory's occasional outbreaks of temper, his sarcastic humours, and his sometimes unforgiving temper towards certain breaches of monastic and clerical discipline. Those of us who share his gout will be tender to his

[1] *Moralia*, v. 33 ; vii. 24.
[2] *Ib.* xxvii. 75–79 and xvi. 39, 40.
[3] *Ib.* xviii. 5.
[4] *Ib.* xxxv. 28–33.
[5] *Ib.* Pref. 12 ; xiv. 40 ; xx. 61 ; xxiv. 45 ; xxxi. 107.
[6] *Ib.* vi. 56–62 ; *Hom. in Ez.*, i. 3, par. 9 ; i. 5, par. 12 ; ii. 2, par. 8 ; ii. 6, par. 5.
[7] *Moralia*, xii. 22.
[8] *Ib.* xx. 78 ; xxx. 62, 63.
[9] *Ib.* xxv. 28.
[10] *Ib.* xxx. 40, 41.
[11] *Op. cit.* ii. 441 and 442, note.
[12] *Eps. of Gregory*, Prolegomena, xxx.

irascibility, and those who have tiresome friends will also be tender to his sarcasms against dullards and hapless people whose sins are not less irritating because they are sins of omission, while the times needed a master who could be unbending and unforgiving when his great aims were jeopardised. Few men in history, with such a gigantic responsibility and load of work as he had, have got through the task so well and wisely as he did, and with such continual outpouring of gentle, kindly thought for the poor, the helpless, the unprotected, and the weak. Few again, if any, have through their lives shown such persistent solicitude for their own ideals of what was noble and lofty, and have lived up to the very high standards he proposed for others in his works. My friend Dr. Hodgkin denies his claim to be a saint. If these do not constitute claims, I know of none. The statesman, the lawyer, the administrator, the bishop, the theologian, and the high-minded Christian gentleman, can all learn ample lessons from his correspondence and example. As to his narrowness and credulity, and his dogmatic outlook on this world and the next, it was not his fault that he was born in the moral and mental atmosphere of the sixth century, out of which he stepped so far in many other ways; and that in what he fully believed to be the approaching end of "this wicked world" he should have tried to organise as much of it as he could, according to the ideals of a monk, and perhaps at times dreamt of the possibility of such political and moral ideals as have since

fructified in the theocratic monkish polity of Tibet.

While all men are agreed in acknowledging the high character, devotion to duty, practical ability, administrative skill, high mental gifts, and real greatness of Gregory, it would not be judicial to ignore another side of his career, in which, although he was the creature of his time (a very bad time), he put back the finger on the clock of human progress very materially. The period in which he lived has been graphically called "the twilight of the Dark Ages," and the succeeding four centuries present us with only occasional glimpses of dim colour "amidst the encircling gloom." After Gregory's death the shadows fell rapidly, and every form of human culture sank into increasing decadence. Literature, art of all kinds, everything that enlightens and elevates the human mind, or is an antidote to materialism or sybaritism, fell into deeper and deeper lethargy, and the harvests gathered by the bright thought, and the cultured taste, and the great ideals of the Greeks and Romans were buried deep in oblivion. Men's thoughts turned elsewhere than to these things. They had become utterly weary of the fruits and flowers which this world had produced and was producing, and were engrossed with hopes and fears in regard to another and, as they thought, a better world, for which this was a mere apprenticeship. The world they pictured beyond the stars was a strange one, which did not glow with sensual colours, but was draped in grey and austere shadows. Nor is

it wonderful that the pendulum should have swung very far when it began to swing, and that asceticism and abnegation of anything that could please or bring joy to life was deemed to be holy. That self-torture (mental and bodily), and the persecution of every human passion and taste, should have been considered the highest of ideals. That literature and art should alike have been (not merely neglected) but denounced in favour of the endless metaphysical word-splitting of half-instructed theologians trying to paint pictures of another life (entirely beyond human ken), and to fasten down the attributes and the moral standards of the Almighty to definitions of their own concocting. Lastly, that the life of the cloister, with its continual and ceaseless prayers and bodily suffering, and with no mental food save that which was supplied by the Scriptures or the lives of saints, should have been treated as the ideal existence of man, and monks and nuns and anchorites as the only people who had solved life's riddle well.

Of all this Gregory was an uncompromising champion, and a devoted follower of the layman, Justinian, who had finally closed the Academy at Athens, and thus dispersed the last school of philosophy and all it then meant, and initiated the Dark Ages. We find nowhere in his writings any signs of sympathy with culture, in the modern sense of the term. Greek, as we have seen, he did not know, but the Latins had great poets and great historians as well as the Greeks. He deemed their writings pagan and wicked.

It was not the study of classical books only which was then apparently entirely discouraged in Rome. The poverty of the Capital of Christendom in religious works is equally marked. In a letter to the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, Gregory says the Roman Church did not possess the Canons of the Council of Constantinople nor its Acts, nor had it accepted them except such as defined the objections against the Macedonians. He therefore knew nothing about the Eudoxians who, he understood, had been condemned by that Synod. He could find no mention of them, he says, either in Philaster or in the blessed Augustine, and only in the history of Sozomen, which was not accepted by the Apostolic See because of its laudation of Theodore of Mopsuestia.[1] In another letter to the Patriarch of Alexandria, who had asked the Pope to send him "the Acts" of all the martyrs which had been collected in the time of Constantine by Eusebius of Cæsarea, he confesses that he had never heard of their acts before he received the letter of Eulogius. Besides what Eusebius said in his books (*i.e.* his histories) about the Holy Martyrs, he was not aware of any in the archives of the Church or in the libraries of Rome, unless it were some few things collected in a single volume. They had the names of nearly all the martyrs, with their passions attached, contained in one volume, and celebrated the solemnities of Mass on certain days in commemoration of them ; but in

[1] *E. and H.* vii. 31 ; Barmby, vii. 34.

that volume it was not indicated who each was, and how he suffered, but only his name, and the place and day of his passion.[1] Again, from a letter written to Anastasius, the Patriarch of Antioch, it would seem that even the Acts of some of the other Councils were not then available in Rome, and notably those of the first Council of Ephesus, which the Patriarch had said he acknowledged. Gregory said he only had access to an heretical document which had been sent to him from the Royal City (*i.e.* Constantinople), and which affirmed that certain Catholic views as well as heretical ones had been censured there, and he bids his correspondent, in consequence, to apply to the Churches of Alexandria and Antioch for the Acts of this Synod. Gregory seems to say that its only Acts he had by him approved views of Celestinus and Pelagius, whereas it was known that those two theologians were condemned at it: "*Illa enim Synodus, quae sub primae Ephesinae imagine facta est, quaedam in se oblata capitula asserit adprobata, quae sunt Caelestini atque Pelagii praedicamenta. Et cum Caelestinus atque Pelagius in ea synodo sint damnata, quomodo poterant illa capitula recipi, quorum damnabantur auctores.*"[2] A more surprising confession is made in a third letter, written to Ætherius, Bishop of Lyons; where he says that, as to the acts or writings of "the blessed Irenæus," they had long been searching for them, but had not succeeded in finding

[1] *E. and H.* viii. 28; Barmby, viii. 29.
[2] *E. and H.* ix. 135; Barmby, ix. 49.

them.[1] But perhaps the most wonderful proof of his limitations in this regard is the fact that in his voluminous works we find no mention whatever of the two men who, next to himself, illuminated letters in the sixth century the most—namely, Boethius and Cassiodorus. Gregory was as little devoted to art of any pretensions (except perhaps music) as he was to literature. In these matters his outlook was that of the early Quakers and Puritans, and he was imitated by the crowds of men who admired him, and who in other days would have thronged to the Alexandrian, or Athenian, or Rhodian schools, and would have filled their homes with things of beauty and taste. He constantly impressed upon his correspondents the dangers and the wickedness of reading secular writers who made paganism attractive, and whose philosophy might sap their faith. For an example, it will suffice to recall his well-known letter to Desiderius, Archbishop of Vienne.[2] Again, as Mr. Dudden, who tries to palliate the fact, allows: "It is very remarkable that one whose letters deal with so many various topics should not say a word about any schools of grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, and jurisprudence, which were formerly endowed by the State, nor does he anywhere mention a professor or man of letters. What is still more remarkable, and in this he is in marked contrast with his contemporaries, Gregory of Tours and Fortunatus, is

[1] *E. and H.* xi. 40; Barmby, xi. 56.
[2] *Vide ante*, 177, 178; *E. and H.* i. 34; Barmby, xi. 54.

that he shows hardly a trace of any knowledge of the ancient authors, nor do we hear of any great libraries then existing at Rome; the great classical libraries seem to have been closed or destroyed."

It seems to me that the tradition preserved by John of Salisbury (himself a most remarkable scholar for his period, the twelfth century), which Mr. Dudden seems to doubt, has considerable probability. He says that Gregory not only banished the study of astrology (*mathesin*), but committed to the flames the contents of the libraries in the Palatine and Capitol in order to ensure the exclusive study of the Scriptures; while another tradition says he had every copy of Cicero and Livy he could lay his hands upon burnt! It appears to me that this is exactly the kind of thing Gregory would have done with the full approval of his friends and intimates. *A fortiori* is it probable that he would have destroyed the statues of gods and goddesses, especially the naked ones, which still remained in the Roman streets and perhaps also some of the pagan temples. This would be absolutely consonant with the whole spirit of the times in its attitude to the old religion, whose adherents were by no means all extinct. It is true that the fig tree and the orange tree of culture had ceased to produce any very tempting fruit. The old faiths out of which they grew were dead and discarded, the gods deposed, and what remained was a great mass of magic and necromancy. It is true that the practical teaching of ethics was also very sick. Patriotism and

civic virtue were rare amidst a crowd of sybaritic nobles and gentry and a grossly immoral court, where selfishness prevailed everywhere among the rich, and sullen hatred and despair among the human kine, who worked from hour to hour and week to week to keep this tinsel life going. It is true that the principal literature which men then cultivated and read was foul and nauseous, and the great masterpieces of antiquity were neglected for the ribaldry of Petronius and Juvenal. The coarse material lives destroyed all taste for ideal beauty of any kind, and the patrons of such art as remained were dominated by the rudest standards. The philosophers who had replaced the priests as teachers of men, had largely become triflers, teaching not wisdom, but the arts of simulation and of casuistry, in which truth was not the aim but the victim, and the plaything of the nimblest wit. What men cared for most when they went to "the play," was not to hear Sophocles or Euripides, Terence or Plautus, but to watch the disgusting cruelties of the circus, and the slaughter of human beings who had been specially trained to kill each other. Life had become a form of mad epicureanism in which duty and sacrifice were despised, and vast crowds of slaves were employed in furnishing the rich with luxury and debauchery.

It was amidst these surroundings that Christianity spent its early centuries, when persecution and ill-usage did so much to strengthen some picked men's characters, while the Sermon on the Mount condensed

a view of life and duty which was as sharply contrasted as may be with those in fashion. It is not wonderful that those who sought shelter under its shadow should have loathed the old ways, and should have revolted against them and wished to tear them up root and branch; and after the State had countenanced the new departure, that it should have become fashionable among the highly placed as well as the poor folk, to whom the Galilean Prophet chiefly preached. It is not wonderful, too, that the young and untainted should have become recruits in larger and larger numbers to the new life, and been sickened by the poisoned and the rotten standards of their fathers. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the barren darkness of the next four centuries in culture and in learning can be largely traced to Gregory's vehement campaign against both, and to his substitution in the Western lands, of obscurantism for art and literature and science and philosophy, which were only saved from utter extinction by the preservation of a few old books in a few old libraries, the opening of which, some centuries later, was like the first sunrise after an Arctic winter.

It is not altogether cheering to those whose survey of the world's history does not allow them to ignore other sources than Christianity for the enlightening and moral forces which have leavened it betimes, to remember all this. To remember, further, that while a great moral teacher who could not naturally see beyond the canopy of clouds which hid the blue

sky in those sad days, was driving men away from culture and beauty and enlightenment and gladness with whips and scorpions, and bidding them march continually down a long avenue of cypresses which led to their graves, there was about to break upon the world another mighty movement under the ægis of another faith with very different ideals. This, while it was mingled with many fantastic details, had a masculine grip of some mighty ethical truths and moral standards, and especially that of reality as contrasted with pretence, and the equating of conduct with the conventions uttered by the lips. That while Rome sank deeper and deeper into the slough of mediæval darkness, Baghdad and Cairo, Granada and Cordova revived arts and letters and poetry and philosophy, and planted the waste places of the East once more with refreshing gardens. Their weapons were sometimes cruel, but it remains true that (although it was at the point of the sword) they did teach that lying and ribaldry and moral and physical cowardice and sloth were diseases that needed sunlight and the unbounded forces of mental and moral culture for their dissipation, and not a cloistered seclusion for their cure. Further, that religion was not a bundle of opinions merely, but of active duties ; and that men would be judged, not for the shibboleths they repeated, but for the extent to which they made the world better and happier. They gathered a great harvest, and presently they passed it on ; and when the Christian world was at its lowest, it was from the Arabs, the

Moors, and the despised Jews, who formed the intermediaries, that men learned once more what a power for creating character and sustaining civilisation there once had been in the literature and art of Greece, and in the laws and the stoical fortitude of Rome. Eventually their teaching took the Christian world by storm in the human tornado we call the Renascence, and thus undid the well-meant but nevertheless paralysing influence of Saint Gregory. This was so, and yet we return again in a gentle mood to the great man and his aims, —mistaken maybe, but crossed by no sordid and mean threads; and we will conclude our notice of him in the words of the old Monk of Whitby, who was his first biographer:[1]—

"*Sanctum Gregorium nobis in amminiculum vocamus, cum sanctis scilicet apostolis et martyribus, inter quos eum in celis Christo credimus conjunctum. Illum que esse super familiam suam servum fidelem et prudentem, qui in tempore tritici tam abundanter donavit illi mensuram, ut cunctis per orbem sacramenta ruminando divina, qualiter illud granum frumenti mortuum multum cadens in terram adferens fructum*[2] *a fidelibus cottidie debeat libari atque in perpetuam gustari salutem; quo jam de eo, qui in eo manet et ipse in illo, dicebat: beatus ille servus quem cum venerit dominus suus invenerit sic facientem; Amen dico vobis, super omnia bona sua constituet eum.*"[3]

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 45 and 46.
[2] John xii. 24, 25.
[3] Matt. xxiv. 46, 47.

APPENDIX

In reporting the declaration of faith alleged to have been made by Pope Gregory at his accession, which I took from the only source where it is preserved, namely, his life by John the Deacon, I ventured to give a warning that that source is by no means unimpeachable, but very much the reverse. The particular point to which importance attaches is what Gregory's attitude was towards the famous clause in regard to the procession of the Holy Ghost which caused so much friction in later times. The question in dispute is not as to the truth of the affirmation contained in the current edition of the Nicene Creed—with that we are not concerned here; nor with Dr. Pusey's characteristic attempt to direct the issue to that point. It is with the justification of its interpolation in the Creed, if any, that we have to do. As early as the year 400 it had been deemed necessary, at a Spanish Synod held at Toledo, to affirm the double procession of the Holy Spirit against the Priscillianists.[1] This did not affect the Creed, however. At the third Council of Toledo, held

[1] Hefele, iii. 175.

in 589, twenty-three anathemas were framed, the third of which reads as follows: "Whosoever does not believe or has not believed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, etc. etc., let him be anathema."[1]

In the Creed of Constantinople, as recited and adhered to at the same Council, the words *et Filio* are inserted in the clause *Spiritum vero Sanctum nec creatum nec genitum sed procedentem ex Patre et Filio profitemur.*

This is the first time, so far as is known, that the clause occurs in any Creed. It is possible that it may have been used in a Creed in Spain before this date, but no record of the fact remains.

St. Isidore, Archbishop of Seville, in his Rule of Faith[2] speaks of the Holy Spirit as *ex Patre et Filio procedentem.*

The Creed in this form was again thus subscribed at other Councils of Toledo in 653 and 681.[3] It seems plain, then, that the interpolation was first introduced into the Creed in Spain, and as far as we know in 589.

Very strangely, the first evidence we have of its being accepted in a Creed elsewhere was in England. This was at the Council of Hatfield, held in 680, the account of which is given by Bede. In proclaiming its Rule of Faith, he includes

[1] Swainson, *The Nicene and Apostles' Creed*, 145.

[2] *Regula Fidei*, Migne, lxxxiii. p. 817. Swainson, *op. cit.* 235, note 1.

[3] Swainson, 147.

the clause, *et Spiritum Sanctum procedentem ex Patre et Filio inenarrabiliter.*[1]

Dr. Bright attributes the insertion of the clause there to the influence of Abbot Hadrian.[2] This seems to me highly improbable and contrary to all the traditions of the latter, and I am not at all certain that the clause was not interpolated in Bede. After writing this, I notice that Mr. Swainson in referring to it says: "I suppose the MS. has not been tampered with." It is at all events curious, as he urges, that in France the insertion of the clause in the Creed did not take place till long after this. He says that in the Gelasian Sacramentary and Martyrology (considered to be of the eighth century, and preserved in the Paris Library, 12047), in the recital of the Creed the Holy Spirit is said to proceed from the Father only, showing, as he says, that the interpolation had not then found its way into France. Neither had it, when the Gelasian Sacramentary was written out for French use.[3]

In Italy the evidence of the much later interpolation seems quite conclusive. In its pronouncement on the Catholic Faith by the Council held by Pope Agatho in 679 the *Filioque* clause does not appear.[4] But we can go much further. As Mr. H. R. Percival says, in 809 a Council was held at Aix-la-Chapelle by Charlemagne, and from it three divines were sent to confer with Pope

[1] Plummer, *Bede*, vol. i. p. 240; see Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 142.

[2] *Op. cit.* 361.

[3] Swainson, *op. cit.* 146, note 2.

[4] Mansi, xi. 290.

Leo III., upon the subject. The Pope opposed the insertion of the *Filioque* clause on the express ground that General Councils had forbidden any addition to be made to the formulary.[1] Later on, the Frankish Emperor asked his bishops what was the meaning of the Creed according to the Latins.[2] Fleury gives the result of his investigations, and says: "In France they continued to chant the Creed with the word *Filioque*, and at Rome they continued not to chant it."[3] "So firmly resolved," continues Mr. Percival, "was the Pope that the clause should not be introduced into the Creed, that he presented two silver shields to the *Confessio* in St. Peter's at Rome, on one of which was engraved the Creed in Latin and on the other in Greek, without the addition. . . . About two centuries later St. Peter Damian[4] mentions them as still in place, and about two centuries later Veccur, Patriarch of Constantinople, declares they hung there still."

It was not till 1014 that for the first time the interpolated Creed was used at Mass with the sanction of the Pope. In that year Benedict VIII. acceded to the urgent request on the subject of Henry II. of Germany, and so the papal authority was forced to yield, and the silver shields have disappeared from St. Peter's.[5] It is plain that the oath taken by the Popes at their election to preserve un-

[1] Labbe, *Conc.* vii. col. 1194. [2] *Capit. Reg. Franc.* i. 483.
[3] Fleury, *Hist. Eccl.* xlv. ch. 48 ; see Percival, *Councils*, p. 166.
[4] *Opusc.* xxxviii.
[5] Percival, *Councils, Late Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 167.

mutilated the decrees of the first five councils was altered in order to equate it with the change thus imposed on the Church, and that Pope Benedict the Eighth on a most vital matter of faith reversed the pronouncements of Leo the Third and Fourth, Benedict the Third, and John the Eighth, and this under the Erastian pressure of the German Emperor. In view of this evidence as to the attitude of the Holy See towards the insertion of the *Filioque* clause in the Creed down to the eleventh century, we can hardly doubt that John the Deacon's inclusion of it in Pope Gregory's profession of faith was a sophistication. It is curious that in reporting the translation of the great Pope's *Dialogues* into Greek by one of his successors, Pope Zacharias, he actually charges the latter with having deliberately omitted the critical words from his translation of that work. Such an omission in a work professing to be the translation of one Pope's work by another Pope seems quite incredible, especially in a work so well known as the *Dialogues*, and if made, only proves the contradictory views of Infallible Popes on such a critical question as the legitimate contents of the Church's Creed.

The fact is, that the interpolation of the clause into a solemn profession of faith made by such a Church Council as that of Nicæa was originally a wicked thing, and its continued presence where it is, in view of the virtually undisputed facts, is little short of a scandal. Bishop Pearson, a very serious and orthodox scholar, says when commenting on

the Eighth Article of the Creed: "The addition of the words to the formal Creed without the consent and against the protestations of the Oriental Church is not justifiable." He then proceeds to justify it only "so long as they pretend it not to be a definition of that Council, but an addition or explication inserted, and condemns not those who, out of a greater respect to such synodical determinations, will admit of no such insertions, nor speak any other language than the Scriptures and the Fathers spoke."

The insertion of the *Filioque* clause was not the only interpolation into the Nicene Creed which first took place at the Council of Toledo; another clause now recited in that Creed by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike has the same irregular origin, namely, the words *Deum ex Deo*, God of God. It is plain, therefore, that the Creed called Nicene in our Prayer Book has no claim to that name. It ought to be called the Creed of Toledo, and the Synod of Toledo is not accepted as authoritative by the English Church.

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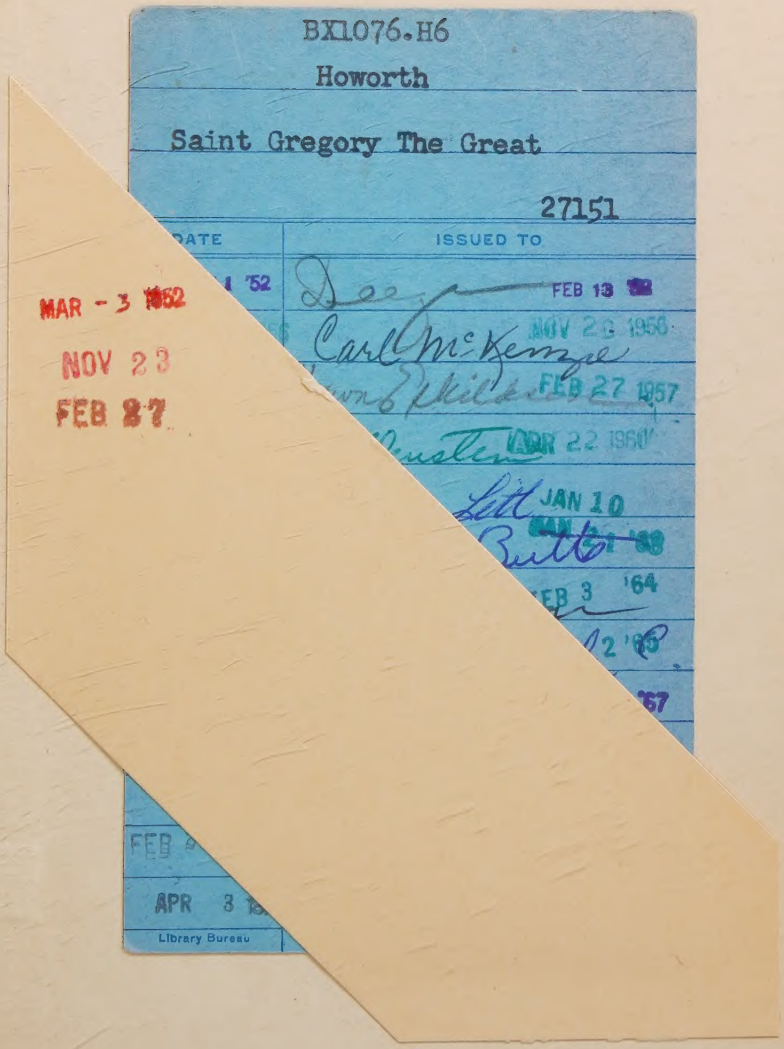

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